

**CROSSING THE BORDER: GENDERED EXPERIENCES OF IMMIGRANT  
CHILDREN IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

by

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## DECLARATION

I declare that “Crossing the border: Gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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20/02/2020

DATE

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my parents my late father McXan Makhanjana Sibanda a visionary, my mother Puloko Makhanjana Sibanda and to all my siblings and friends. Thank you so much for the unwavering support, unconditional love, and the encouragement during the entire years of my studies.

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Psalm 107:1 “Give thanks to the **LORD**, for He is good, His love endures forever.” “In Him I put my trust.”

## **ABSTRACT**

The study examines how the family, peers, and sociocultural environment at school in primary schools in South Africa perpetuated divergent gendered experiences among immigrant learners. A qualitative narrative inquiry was used during the study. Snowball sampling was used to select the participants for the study.

The study drew on a narrative account of 27 participants, 18 immigrant children (9 girls and 9 boys) and nine teachers (6 women and 3 men) from three primary schools in the Johannesburg East District. Semi-structured in-depth interviews and observations were used as instruments to collect data from the participants. Collected data from the semi-structured, in-depth interviews and observations was analysed using thematic content analysis and was presented by using illustrative quotes.

The study revealed that the school is a highly gendered place and serves to propagate gendered experiences among immigrant children in school between girls and boys. The findings of the study have significant implications for stake holders at all levels in education. It is recommended that school principals should ensure that teachers and administrators are familiar with both the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the school's policies and regulations that address gender, sexual harassment, immigration issues, school violence, and bullying.

Improved perception of immigrant children and gender quality in schools will contribute to a positive school environment which may lead to increased positive wellbeing and academic performance to all learners regardless of gender and country of origin.

**KEY TERMS:** gender, socialisation, gender socialisation, gender role shift, immigrant parents, gender roles, immigrant children, migration, gendered experiences, gender differences

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAP	American Academy of Pediatrics
ACRC	African Convention on the Rights of the Child
ANC	African National Congress
APA	American Psychological Association
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
CBD	Central business district
CFS	Child friendly schools
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EFA	Education for All
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
FMSP	Forced Migration Studies Programme
FPE	Free Primary Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HOD	Head of Department
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ILO	International Labour organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IWS	Internet World Statistics
LISA	Longitudinal and Immigrant Student Adaptation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MLAO	Musina Legal Advice Office
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PARPA	Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty
PGD	Protocol on Gender development
RISDP	Regional Indicative Sustainable Development Plan
SA	South Africa
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAMP	Southern African Migration programme

SASA	South African Schools Act
SBA	School-Based Assessments
SGB	School Governing Bodies
SMT	School Management Team
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
UKAID	United Kingdom Aid
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organization

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The migration of people from different parts of the world to South Africa for socioeconomic reasons and job opportunities has been a common feature of the South African society for centuries. The migration of people, mostly unskilled men from the neighbouring countries in the form of migrant labour system increased after the discovery of commercial quantities of gold in the former Transvaal in 1896 (Harington, McGlashan & Chelkowska, 2004:65). The migration of people from other African countries beyond the Southern Africa region intensified after the fall of apartheid and the introduction of an inclusive democracy in 1994. This movement of people involved both legal and illegal immigrants; however, because there is lack of statistical records on illegal immigrants entering South Africa, only estimates for legal immigrants have been provided. Vandeyar (2011:1) estimates that legal migration from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries increased almost tenfold since 1990 to over 4,000,000 visitors a year.

However, the last official census of 2011 established that there were almost 2,2 million immigrants living in South Africa (Statistics South Africa [Stats SA], 2011; Stats SA, 2012). A migration data portal administered by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) shows that in 2017, there were 4 million immigrants living in South Africa. This number excludes the number of foreign families and their children who live illegally in South Africa. Practically, the number of immigrant families and their children could be much higher considering that during the national census, illegal immigrants typically avoid being counted or may provide inaccurate information.

As the population of immigrants increases, the influx of immigrant children into South African schools rises correspondingly, and this requires special attention. This population of immigrant learners seems to be largely excluded from mainstream debates on child protection, gender, and migration studies (Sobantu & Warria, 2013:2). Suárez-Orozco and Qin (2006:165) posited that the “role of gender has been particularly under-theorised in studies of immigrant children”. The absence of gender-related studies could be linked to the fact that research on immigration has focused more on the reasons for immigration than on gender-related migratory experiences.

Overall, most research on migration has either been overlooked (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hillard, 2006:165). Controlling for gender means that we do not have a deeper understanding of the role of gender and we are ignorant of the gender differences between boys and girls. Gender is an important facet of life that cannot be ignored since it affects the way people live. It is responsible for shaping children's experiences at home and school. Gender dictates different ways in which boys and girls are socialised at home and school according to their native cultures (Fulcher, Sutfin & Patterson, 2008:330).

## **1.2 AN OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRANT LEARNERS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

In South Africa, limited research studies have been conducted on immigrant children's experiences. In 1996, Dolby (cited in Foubister, 2011:14) documented the lives of youth at a school in Durban at the close of the twentieth century after the demise of apartheid. Similarly, a study by Douglas (1995:13) at Addington Primary School in Durban established that 160 learners were immigrant, mostly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The findings revealed that immigrant children in South African schools quickly became competent English speakers, while their parents had limited opportunities to learn English. Children often acted as interpreters between teachers and their non-English-speaking parents (Peris, Goeke-More, Cummings & Emery, 2008: 14). In her study of educational and sociocultural experiences of immigrant learners in South Africa, Vandeyar and Vandeyar (2018:68) found that in an attempt to create a sense of belonging, the African immigrant learners forged a continental identity in the spirit of common brotherhood.

Gender-related studies with special reference to immigrant children are noticeably lacking in world literature, and more so in South African literature. According to Ackers and Stalford (2004:4), the gendered experiences of immigrant learners remain a largely under-researched area in South Africa, even though a gender gap in immigrant children's schooling exists. Considering the above, this study sought to explore how the aspects of the school environment, immigrant parents, peers and sociocultural factors influence the gendered experiences of immigrant learners in South African schools.

## **1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

This section gives the justification for or the reasons that motivated this study.



### **1.3.1 Professional Reasons**

The shift in gender role socialisation post-migration signifies radical life changes and the way in which gendered experiences help to shape girls' and boys' schooling and education. Despite these post-migration changes, gendered practices at home and school still mirror those experienced in the country of origin, except that parents and teachers give equal schooling and educational opportunities to both girls and boys. Given this scenario, it is important to investigate the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. This is necessary to gain an understanding of the role of gender in education. It is assumed that the findings of this study would raise awareness and challenge teachers, the DBE officials, policymakers, and practitioners to develop effective ways that can address gender-related issues in education. This study also endeavours to address an existing gap in the literature of gender studies.

### **1.3.2 Personal Reasons**

The motivation to pursue this topic on migration stems from my experiences as a refugee (immigrant) in Botswana and Zambia from 1976 to 1977, and in Angola in 1978. The motivation to undertake the study was further influenced by my experience as a teacher in government public primary schools in Gauteng Province from January 2007 to March 2015. During this time, I came into contact with immigrant children, and I was affected by the hostile treatment that they received from teachers, their peers and the community.

From my experience outlined above, I share these immigrant experiences, as well as the same cultural background with immigrant children. In undertaking this study, I will be careful not to take the children's experiences and make them my own stories, as I am aware of the challenges that can be imposed by role duality. I will adhere to strategies of reflexivity of personal self-awareness, capturing the essence of the learners, or "letting them speak for themselves" and I will insist on getting it right or being accurate (Pillow, 2003:176).

## **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

When immigrant families and children move to a new country, they bring with them their cultures, languages, traditions, and lifestyles, which are often altered once they arrive at their new destination. When immigrants arrive, their status and the gender relationships between women and men change significantly from those in their country of origin. In many immigrants' home countries, for example, in China, traditional gender socialisation is

historically deeply entrenched in societies, with boys being favoured and socialised differently from girls (Suárez-Orozco & Qin, 2006:165; Suárez-Orozco, Gaytán, Bang, Pakes, O'Connor, & Rhodes, 2010:2). These authors argue that it is not uncommon for families to ask an elder daughter to give up her studies to work to support her brother's schooling.

While in their home countries, many families presumably consider investing in their sons' education as a key to maintaining the status of their families (Kiang, Supple, Stein & González, 2012:283; Suárez-Orozco & Qin, 2006:165). However, when immigrant families and their children arrive in a new country, there is a shift in traditional gender role socialisation, with most parents abandoning traditional role gender socialisation patterns practised in their countries of origin. Post migration, these patterns of gender role socialisation start to expose boys and girls to new gendered experiences at home and at school. For example, girls and boys are given equal opportunities to go to school, unlike when they are in their countries of origin where boys are largely given preferences over girls. However, this goes as far as only providing equal educational opportunities to both boys and girls after which parents revert to a "revolving door syndrome". That is, parents give equal educational opportunities to their daughters and sons only after which they revert to their cultural preference of their sons over their daughters. This means that immigrant parents go back to the patriarchal system they practised in their countries of origin. Against this background, this study sought to explore how the aspects of the school environment, immigrant parents, peers and sociocultural factors influence the gendered experiences of immigrant learners in South African schools.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1.5.1 Main Research Question**

To bring the problem statement that this study sought to bring into sharp focus, the main research question is formulated as follows:

**How does gender influence the experiences of immigrant learners in South African schools?**

### **1.5.2 Sub-Questions**

To assist in answering the main question, the following sub-questions were formulated:

- In what ways do sociocultural aspects of schooling influence the gendered experiences of immigrant children?

- How does the learning aspect of schooling influence the gendered experiences of immigrant children?
- In what ways do parents influence the gendered experiences of immigrant children?
- How do peers influence the gendered experiences of immigrant children?

## **1.6 THE AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study was to determine how gender influences the experiences of immigrant children in South African schools.

To address the above aim more clearly, this study sought to pursue the following objectives.

- To explore how sociocultural aspects of schooling influence gendered experiences of immigrant children.
- To investigate how the learning aspect of schooling influences the gendered experiences of immigrant children.
- To explore how parents, influence the gendered experiences of immigrant children.
- To examine how peers, influence the gendered experiences of immigrant children.

## **1.7 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

In this section, different terms used in the study are explained to understand their contextual and operational meanings. Each culture creates its own meanings for the concepts of male and female (Kruger, 1997:11). Therefore, it is important to distinguish the following terms pertinent to the study:

- Sex –This refers to the external organs that describe a person’s biological maleness and femaleness (American Psychological Association, 2015:5).
- Gender –This means an individual’s personal and psychological experiences of being male or female (Tolman, Striepe & Harmon, 2003:4). In this study, gender refers to different gendered experiences of boys and girls.
- Gender identity – Wharton (2005:36) defines gender identity as the people’s perceptions of themselves as women or men.
- Roles–These are culturally defined rights and responsibilities which define behaviour considered appropriate for a boy or girl (Berendt, 2008:7; Haralambos & Holborn 2008:532).

- Gender roles – Haralambos and Holborn (2008:532) define gender roles as the prescribed cultural roles that an individual must play in a society, based on sexual differences.
- Socialisation – This is the process through which the child as an individual is taught how to respect his or her environmental laws, norms, and customs (Beal, 1994:12).
- Gender socialisation– This is a more focused form of socialisation, concerned with how children of different sexes are socialised into their gender roles (Giddens, 1993:165), and taught what it means to be male and female (Morris, 1988:366).

## **1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was limited to immigrant learners in black townships schools. It was limited to three primary schools in Kaalfontein, Midrand in Gauteng Province, South Africa. Its goal was to explore the gendered experiences of immigrant children in schools.

## **1.9 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature reveals that socialisation is the process through which human beings learn and acquire the values, behaviour, attitudes, laws, and culture of the social group to which they belong. Crespi (2003:280) describes gender socialisation as the acquisition of behaviour and attitudes deemed appropriate for a gender, that is, female or male. The gender acquisition process takes place through the family, school (teachers and peer networks) and is influenced by the sociocultural environment at school (Sifuna & Sawamura, 2006:6), in religious settings and through the mass media (Stromquist, 2007:281).

According to these authors, these multiple institutions relay gender conditions and sex stereotyping messages that are reinforced through role allocation in the family (Chege & Sifuna, 2006:281). For example, at home, parents interact with children along gender lines and allocate roles and responsibilities according to whether one is a girl or a boy.

The literature further reveals that children learn and acquire gendered experiences through interacting with teachers, peer groups and the sociocultural environment in school. Sociocultural factors include the curriculum and participating in co-curricular activities, patterns of behaviour, and personality traits and experiences (Buchmann et al., 2006:43), educational aspirations, community attitudes, parental and student beliefs about education and schoolwork, and student behaviour (Feliciano, 2012:432).

According to Legewie and DiPrete (2012:281), teachers directly influence academic environment because they have the potential to modify student behaviour and produce stronger academic learners. Stromquist (2007:282) submits that teachers wield a large amount of influence and are role models as they spend more time with learners at school. During these interactions with learners at school, teachers may socialise learners according to the gender of the child. As a result of differentiated gendered socialisation by parents at home, interaction with peers, the prevailing sociocultural environment in school, immigrant children learn and acquire different gender experiences.

This study sought to explore how the aspects of the school environment, immigrant parents, peers and sociocultural factors influence the gendered experiences of immigrant learners in South African schools. The literature review that examines the gendered experiences of immigrant children in host countries is explored in detail in Chapter 3.

## **1.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study used the gender schema theory (GST) to discuss the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. Three common epistemologies that have been explicated to give an account of gender development and its functions are the cognitive development theories, the social learning theories which together have been blended to form the GST (Bussey & Bandura, 1999:677). The theoretical framework used in this study is explored in detail in Chapter 2, which reviews related literature.

## **1.11 RESEARCH STRATEGIES**

This section spells out the research strategies that were used to investigate gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. A research strategy is a general plan that helps a researcher to answer the research questions in a systematic way (Lewis & Thornhill, 2009:4). The components of a research strategy include clear objectives, research questions and data collection resources. Its major function is to help the researcher to use data collection methods to support the arguments (Lewis & Thornhill, 2009: 4).

### **1.11.1 Research Methodology and Design**

This research used the qualitative research methodology because the processes of data collection were carried out in a natural environment. Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the researcher in a natural setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:30). Since the

researcher examined gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools, he interacted with the learners utilising the qualitative tools of interviews, and observations. A qualitative approach to data collection was appropriate because its objective was to understand the different experiences of the participants being studied (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:382). The researcher used in-depth semi-structured interviews to investigate gendered experiences of immigrant learners. This method enables the researcher to be deeply enmeshed during the research and allows him to observe and record the findings continuously (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:382).

#### 1.11.1.1 Case study design

This study used a qualitative case study design and a narrative inquiry to investigate the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:384). The choice of a case study was appropriate because this research is concerned with the description of gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. Semi-structured interviews, observations, official documents, and field-notes were used as data collection tools because they “entice quotes of key participants and anecdotes” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:114).

Despite the advantages stated above, a case study design has been criticised for its dependence on a single case exploration, making it difficult to reach a generalising conclusion (Flyvbjerg, 2011:302). The critics further state that case studies provide very little basis for scientific generalisation since they use a small number of subjects, some conducted with only one subject (Yin, 2014:451). In addition, case studies have been criticised for collecting too much data, which makes data collection difficult and produces massive amounts of documents (Yin, 2014:451). The assumption is that if data is too massive, there are probabilities that important information may be omitted or some stories may be given more detail than others (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001:5).

#### 1.11.1.2 Narrative inquiry

The qualitative approach to inquiry is a means by which the researcher systematically gathers, analyses and reprints peoples’ stories as told by them, which challenges the traditional and modernist views of truth, reality, knowledge and personhood (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006:44). In a narrative inquiry, subjective meanings and a sense of self and identity are negotiated as

stories unfold, bearing in mind that stories are reconstructions of the persons' experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:167). A narrative inquiry is philosophically rooted and derives its influence from postmodernism, social constructionism, constructivism, and feminism paradigms, where emphases are placed on the meaning of the stories told by individual children (Smith & Sparkes, 2008:5).

In this study, the gendered experiences of immigrant learners were explored from their lived experiences narrated to the researcher. While learners narrated their stories, the researcher listened to the conversations, taking in what was being said and comparing it with his personal understanding, and inquiring about how the pieces of the stories made sense together (Polkinghorne, 2005:137). This enabled the researcher to understand how the parents and the school factors indirectly contribute to gendered educational outcomes.

The value of narrating lies in the truth of the experience of letting learners speak for themselves about their daily lives in schools and communities, their thoughts, and feelings (Sugiman, 2015:5). Learners told their stories, while at the same time reflecting on their stories. In reflecting on their experiences, they recollected and retold memories, thereby constructing and reconstructing meaning through the narratives that ensued (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006:44).

A narrative inquiry is premised on the belief that as human beings, we come to understand meanings in our lives through stories (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2010:11). In a narrative inquiry, individuals give their personal, first-hand accounts to researchers (Creswell & Miller, 2002:124). Sparkes and Smith (2014:5) assert that individuals tell stories of their experiences and modify them by retelling and reliving them to understand life experiences. In this way, memories and personal accounts remain unique experiences, sensitivities, and identities (Chamberlain & Leydesdorff, 2004:227).

A narrative inquiry has limitations like any other research method. A weakness of a narrative inquiry is that when researchers take peoples' stories and place them into a larger narrative, they impose meaning on participants' lived experiences. Researchers may also intentionally smooth the participant's story during reporting in a process called "the Hollywood plot". This poses a danger in narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006:44) since it may be viewed as comprising the quality of data output.

### **1.11.2 Data Collection Methods**

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used to collect data from 18 immigrant learners who were selected by means of snowball sampling techniques. The researcher took time to hear the life stories being narrated, which gave insight into the gendered experiences of immigrant children since each story revealed something about the children's lives (Atkinson, 2004:961). The data captured offered the researcher a deeper understanding of the immigrant children's gendered experiences in South African schools. I observed learners in their natural settings, which allowed me to experience first-hand as an insider, shed insight into the participants' social interactions, provide context for the behaviour, and explain the participants' behaviours (Verma, Zec & Skinner, 1994:6).

The interviews were conducted at schools at the venues allocated by the school authorities. The interviews took place during the afternoon periods and lasted for approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. The interviews were recorded, and the field notes taken at the same time, and thereafter, they were carefully transcribed and subsequently analysed.

### **1.12 PARTICIPANTS AND SITE SELECTION**

The participants in this study were immigrant learners attending primary schools in the Johannesburg East District, Gauteng, South Africa. The selection of immigrant learners was done through their home language teachers. Most immigrant learners struggle to learn indigenous South African languages, and it was therefore deemed that teachers who taught local languages were more likely to identify them.

The research sites for this study were three primary schools in the Johannesburg East District within a radius of three kilometres of each other. The schools were deliberately selected because they all had a common variable of interest, namely immigrant children; however, they differed in physical structures and school culture. Teachers in these schools were given the liberty to identify immigrant learners who would participate in the study. All the learners attending these schools were black as they lived in African-only suburbs. With the guidance of teachers, the snowball technique was used to select 18 immigrant learners (nine boys and nine girls) from each of the three schools. All the learners participating in the study were drawn from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds.



### **1.13 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Data were analysed by means of content analysis. According to Sereci (2009:33), content analysis is a systematic way of condensing raw data into themes or categories constructed on valid inferences and interpretations. It allows for subjective interpretation of the content of text data through a systematic process of classifying, coding, and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1278).

Having initially obtained responses from the participants' interviews, I read and reread the data I had collected to get a general idea of the information at hand before analysing it. Analysis began with the themes emerging from raw data, a process sometimes referred to as "open coding" (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009:59). The themes that appeared similar were identified, given a code name, and grouped together. The objective was to build expressive groupings that became the source of my analysis. The narratives, expressions and actions that appeared similar were put together. This enabled dismantling raw data into manageable units that allowed for proper analysis. To elucidate the findings, quotes and participants' narratives are presented verbatim on occasion.

Finally, the information that has been organised and grouped into chunks is transcribed and translated into meaningful narratives that are easy to read. In this way, the research report would be a rich, tightly woven account that "closely approximates the reality it represents" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:11).

### **1.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Immigrant children are a vulnerable group that needs special attention, safety, and security from emotional and psychological harm during data collection. Before commencement of data collection, I sought permission by applying for ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Education at the University of South Africa. Subsequently, I also asked for permission from children, parents, or guardians in the form of consent and assent letters before carrying out empirical research. Since all the learners were under 18 years of age, their parents or guardians were requested to sign a consent letter on their behalf and all the information about the risks and benefits of taking part in the study was disclosed. After securing consent from parents, the learners were provided with full information that might reasonably influence their willingness to participate by means of an assent form that they could understand and comprehend (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:52). In this regard, the selected

learners were required to sign an assent form, which outlined all the ethical issues and their rights, such as anonymity, confidentiality, right of withdrawal, dissemination and storage of data were highlighted (Vandeyser, 2012:235). Confidentiality is central to educational research, and therefore, it is vital that the researcher should not disclose information about the learners.

As proposed by Elmir, Schmied, Jackson and Wilkes (2011:12), I protected the learners' rights to confidentiality and privacy by providing a set of detailed interview questions and informing participants that they could stop if they felt uncomfortable. I proposed to share the findings with participants by including my contact information at the end of the study so that those who required information about the study, they might request it. I would also prepare a summary of the research findings and distribute them to the participants, schools, and DBE.

### **1.15 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER**

In qualitative research, the role of the researcher is considered instrumental to data collection and is characterised by role duality (Lincoln & Guba, 2003:1). Role duality often causes researchers to struggle to balance their perceived personalities and the roles they play (Bryman & Cassell, 2006:41). Creswell (2008:557) posits that a researcher creates a separate section on the "role of the researcher", since it is a means of incorporating reflexivity in the study. The strategies that may be taken to avoid researcher bias include identification of the researcher's values and reflection on how personal feelings may affect the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:385).

### **1.16 CHAPTER DIVISION AND SUMMARY**

This study is divided into the following six chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background. This chapter provides the introduction and background to the study, the research problem, research questions, preliminary literature, theoretical framework, research design, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter 2: Gender socialisation, enrolment patterns and reasons for migration. This chapter will provide a detailed discussion of the literature review on the South African context of migration in South Africa.

Chapter 3: Gender development discourse and immigrant children`s gendered experiences in schools. This chapter reviews international and scholarly literature and theories on gendered experiences of immigrant learners.

Chapter 4: Research design and methodology. This chapter presents the research strategy, paradigmatic approaches, research design, data collection, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations and quality measures.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the study. This chapter uses the emerging themes and sub-themes to present the research findings.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations of the study. This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from literature and empirical study, propose recommendations for improvement and suggest areas for further research.

## **1.17 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Chapter 1 provided the introduction and background to the study and outlined the history of migration to South Africa. As illustrated in the introduction and background, people started to migrate to South Africa in 1896 after the discovery of commercial quantities of gold in the Transvaal. Even after the demise of apartheid, there was an unprecedented increase in the number of women and children migrating to South Africa. The increase in the number of immigrant children to schools impacted negatively on the education system of South Africa. It also raised major concerns about the intersection of gender, education, and migration in schools. Furthermore, the chapter also presented the problem statement, the research questions, aims and objectives, research methodology and the demarcation of the study. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework of the study, gender socialisation, enrolment patterns and the reasons for migration from the country of origin.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **GENDER SOCIALISATION, ENROLMENT PATTERNS AND REASONS FOR MIGRATION**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 1 highlighted the introduction and the background context of people migrating to South Africa. This was followed by the statement of the problem and research questions, a brief description of the rationale for the study, preliminary literature review and identification of the theoretical framework. The last part dealt with the research strategies and ethical considerations. This chapter contains four sections. The first section explores gender development theory used to understand gender role acquisition. The second part examines the background to gender influence and how the family, peers, and schools influence gender acquisition during socialisation. This is followed by chronicling the gendered enrolment patterns in primary and secondary schools in some selected SADC, namely Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. Finally, the chapter analyses the fundamental reasons why people from across Africa and the world migrate to South Africa. The following section presents the theoretical framework and the literature review.

#### **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

There are many theories that are used to understand the concept of gender socialisation, that is, ‘Why do girls and boys behave in different ways?’ The Social Learning Theory (SLT), the Cognitive Development Theory (CDT) and the gender schema theory (GST) will be used in this research study to explain and help us understand why girls and boys behave differently. These theories will enable the researcher to connect with existing knowledge on gender and will help in the selection of the research methodology of the study. Furthermore, the theories will enable the researcher to identify the limitations of the research, specify key variables that are of interest and further assist the researcher examine how variables differ in certain circumstances.

The following section presents a discussion of the SLT, the CDT and the GST.

### **2.2.1 The Social Learning Theory**

The SLT postulates that rewards and punishment are used as tools to inculcate gender-appropriate and inappropriate behaviours according to one's gender. The social environment plays an important part in enabling girls and boys to acquire gender roles according to their genders. What this implies is that girls acquire sex-appropriate behaviours to be feminine, and boys acquire sex-appropriate behaviours to be masculine via rewards, punishment, observation, and imitating models within a given society (Eagly, 1987:23).

Within the family, children often get sanctioned for acting outside their gender roles. For example, a boy may be reprimanded (punished) by way of a verbal or facial expression for playing with an item or object that is defined as feminine, such as a doll, while a girl may be hugged (rewarded) for playing with the same object. Gender role behaviours are those imposed overtly or covertly by society (Gagnon & Simon, 1993:120). This means that children are exposed to a set of expectations that define some behaviours as appropriate and others as inappropriate for individuals of a specific gender (Cahill & Adams, 1997:87). This in turn influences children to act differently in their daily lives according to whether they are boys or girls.

SLT contends that children model themselves according to same-sex individuals, considering same-sex peers, and establishing a closer relationship with same-sex parents. Friendship choices and pressure from peers increase the chances of gender stereotype formation, particularly among boys, who have a propensity to "self-police" peers, ridiculing those who show feminine traits (Morrow, 2006:56). In addition, the toys children play with are likely to influence gender-typed choices (Hughes, 2003:2). During such play, children discover and internalise gender roles. It is during this period that children identify themselves as girls and or boys. They also choose activities and objects that are gender-biased according to whether they are a boy or a girl. Gender-biased activities establish the associations between play and gender identity formation.

Within the family, children are more likely (although not always) to identify with the same-sex parents, where the child reproduces whole patterns of behaviour without necessarily being trained or rewarded to do so (Sian, 1994:42). Researchers on gender socialisation have found that children internalise gender roles when they are exposed to role models within the child's environment (Bakan, 1997:6). This means that children who have formed representations

linked to men, such as aggressiveness, and those related to a women, such as nurturance, are reflective of the adults around them (Munroe & Munroe, 1986:116; William & Best, 1990:32).

In the same vein, within the family, parents do not give equal treatment to girls and boys. For example, Leaper (2000) found that mothers favoured playing affiliated games with girls, which promoted closer interactions that were warm, supportive, and responsive. On the other hand, fathers, as opposed to mothers, were more likely to react negatively to cross-gender behaviour in their sons. It is common in families that certain colours, like pink, are reserved for girls, while other colours, like blue, are meant for boys. These contrasting representations, reflected to children, form the basis of gendered experiences later in their lives.

Considering that children spend up to 10 hours a day at school (Grafwallner, Fontaine, Torre & Underhill, 2006:93), the school inevitably influences gender socialisation. Teachers treat children differently according to whether they are boys and girls. For example, Aina and Cameron (2011:321) found that preschool teachers used gender-typed toys and colours, like pink for girls and blue for boys, to differentiate between the two genders in their classrooms. Furthermore, research reveals that gender inequalities and bias are encouraged in schoolbooks (Chick, Heilman-Houser & Hunter, 2002:63). Furthermore, teachers were found to be biased and discriminatory towards a gender, for example, a group of teachers labelled girls as passive learners, and therefore, more teachable than boys (Erden & Wolfgang, 2004:7).

Teachers are an important component in gender socialisation because they reflect the societal norms and values of that society, as such; they do not educate, but inculcate these norms and values to children. For example, at school, children are seated or lined up according to their gender and are also treated differently. Certain behaviours are tolerated from boys but not from girls; for example, when an administrator ignores an act of sexual harassment, they are silently enabling the degradation of girls (Balley, 2007:102:84).

SLT postulates that gender socialisation is responsible for transmitting gender roles through rewards and punishment, and that imitation and modelling play important roles in transmitting gender-appropriate behaviours to children. During gender socialisation, the theory claims that children are required to concentrate on peers of the same-sex, and they identify more closely with their same-sex parents.

However, challenges to this theory are that there is a lack of evidence supporting this claim in research. During experiments, children do not regularly choose same-sex peers or their same-

sex parents (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974:100; William, 1987:2). Social learning theorists treat children as submissive participants with little or no input during gender role socialisation.

### **2.2.2 The Cognitive Development Theory**

The CDT evolved from an appraisal of the SLT. The CDT is credited to Kohlberg who proposed that gender is a learned cognitive social concept (Martin & Ruble, 2004:77). His views were based on Piaget's stages of cognitive development, which describe children as active agents who use connections within the social milieu to build an understanding of the world around them (William, 1987:2). Kohlberg (1981:54) claimed that children's behaviour is a product of their cognitive understanding of gender. Cognitive interpretation of gender is the product of children's individual efforts at gender socialisation, and it is a way for children to classify themselves or others according to gender, that is, according to whether they are boys or girls.

During the process of gender identity, children internalise gender and classify themselves according to whether they are female or male. They also develop gender-appropriate behaviour that is linked to the sex or gender of that individual. Once children reach a stage of understanding of gender, this is referred to as "gender constancy" (Kohlberg, 1981:54). Gender constancy is the conviction that a child's individual gender is static and permanent. Once they establish a belief in gender-permanence, children positively identify themselves with their own gender and spontaneously pursue only those behaviours that are congruent with their perceptions. Children feel rewarded once they reach cognitive constancy, so they are motivated to put more effort into developing those behaviours that are congruent with their self-beliefs to generate and sustain stability. For example, to maintain stability, the following cognitive process may occur: "I am a boy, therefore I want to do boy things, therefore the opportunity to do boy things (and to gain approval for doing them) is rewarding" (Kohlberg, 1966:2). In the above statement, the boy recognises his gender knowledge that influences him to reach gender constancy, implying that knowledge about one's gender is linked to one's own behaviour and is governed by one's age or maturity.

Gender constancy is the ability to realise that one's sex or gender is a permanent quality resulting from biological creation, and not based on artificial features such as the length of hair, style of clothing, and/or choice of clothing (Kohlberg, 1966:3). Slaby and Frey (1975:29)

proposed three underlying principles of gender constancy that are linked to children's ages or are chronologically based, namely, gender identity, stability, and constancy.

Gender identity or the realisation that one is a girl, boy, man, or woman, generally occurs between the ages of two and three and a half years. During this stage, children begin to identify their own gender, including the sex or gender of others (Kohlberg, 1981:55). Gender stability is child's ability to realise that their gender does not change, and will remain as it is forever, and this happens when children are five years old. Lastly, gender constancy is regarded as a maturity stage and is learned when children are aged between six and seven years (Kohlberg, 1981). Once a child reaches gender constancy, they appreciate that their gender will never change. At this final stage, the child understands that even if a man puts on a dress, he is still a man and will never become a woman. However, Siann (1994) posits that even at the last stage of gender constancy, children's understanding of gender is governed by concrete rules. These include the fact that girls have long hair, and boys have beards.

Despite the major contribution of this theory, there is some critique regarding its categorisation of gender development. According to Huston (1983:1), research has failed to corroborate the association between children's realisation of gender constancy and their gender-associated behaviours.

According to Unger and Crawford (1992:145), children exhibit inclinations for objects and activities centred on gender by the age of three years. Similarly, Carter and Levy (1988:62), Emmerich and Shepard (1984:234), and Martin, Wood and Little (1990:33) claim that children prefer to play with toys traditionally associated with their gender, to model their behaviour after same-sex models (Bussey & Bandura, 1984:123), and to reward peers for gender-appropriate behaviour (Bussey & Bandura, 2004; Lam, Lee & Mizerski, 2009:27), long before they reach gender constancy. This disputes the assertion by the CDT that children start participating in gender identity behaviours when they have reached seven years of age. This suggests that the CDT underestimates the age at which children start the process of gender identity, and evidence presented points to the fact that gender constancy starts at a much earlier age than that suggested by cognitive development theorists.



### **2.2.3 The Gender Schema Theory**

The GST is based on the SLT (cf. 2.2.1) and CDT, and therefore, is reflective of the two theories. Bem (1981:616) first coined the term ‘gender development’ as a critique of CDT after it failed to provide an explanation as to why children socialised themselves based on a sex category in particular, while simultaneously acknowledging that gender schemas, as the name suggests, are acquired through a combination of social and cognitive learning processes. Bem (1983:616) queries “why sex” held the high ground over other categories, such as religion, race, or even eye colour, and became a vital component against which children construct their sex identity. Why does gender influence a child’s sexual identity? Is it because of the belief that gender differences are “natural” and unavoidable and because they are classified as more significant in comparison to religion, race, and eye colour? Bem (1983:616) points to the fact that CDT made the mistake of attaching privileges to individuals’ decisions; that is, children are given the freedom to socialise themselves without any external pressure to behave in a sex-stereotyped way.

Bem (1981:616) developed the GST with the intention of creating a bridge between SLT and CDT. From its name, we can predict that the GST’s basic tenet is built on the concept of schemas.

Schemas are cognitive structures and network associations that help us to organise our perception of the world (Bem, 1983:616; West, 2015:60). The function of schemas is to act like a control room that is responsible for receiving and passing information from various parts that are connected via various networks or associations. In short, a schema is responsible for integrating and processing incoming information (Bem, 1981:354; West, 2015:60). Schemas are hypothetical constructs responsible for housing integrated networks of information about the world, people, events, and actions (Eysenck, 2004:21). For example, if a child internalises information regarding gender identity from the environment, it is compartmentalised within various schemas that assist the child to influence behaviour.

Schemas also help children to predict the future and assist them in planning and fulfilling their objectives. The presence of these schemas influences how children interpret the environments around them. Schemas are societal lenses that shape the way in which we see the world (Bem, 1983:35; West, 2015:60). The norms, values and beliefs about gender identity are all embodied in the schema, and help children associate with and make judgements on gender issues. Gender schemas are cognitive structures that allow children to classify gender features and behaviours

into femaleness and maleness groups, and to generate several relationships within these groups (West, 2015:61). In this sense, the GST is credited for providing gender lenses that influence how we observe the world around us.

GST further postulates that, rather than having rose-coloured glasses, we all live with gender-coloured glasses that enable us to view the world in a gendered way (Bem, 1981:354; West, 2015:61). When children learn about gender in the communities' gender schema, the gender-coloured glasses enable them to establish which characteristics belong to their own gender and which characteristics are relevant for application to them. Through observation of various gender characteristics, children select only those sub-categories that are relevant to their own gender.

Ben (1981:354) contended that children group information according to gender because the social milieu maintains a gender dichotomy and makes gender a dominant aspect in children's lives. This underscores that society is responsible for helping children to acquire their gender identity. Bem (1981:354) and West (2015:61) agree that gender is a social agreement, and therefore, society teaches children two things about gender. Firstly, it teaches children about the enormous networks of associations related to the sex of the child. Secondly, it teaches them that the dichotomy between male and female has widespread and intensive relevance in nearly every aspect of life (Bem, 1981:354).

#### 2.2.2.1 Critique of the gender schema theory

Although the GST is seen as an important theory of development, some critique is unavoidable. Its main criticism is that it fails to clarify irregularities in its conclusions about girls and boys. The theory further states that girls and boys differ in the extent to which they value same-gender activities, emulate same-gender models, and play with same-gender peers, yet in most studies, research finds no differences in girls and gender stereotypes (Banse, Gawronski, Rebetez, Gutt & Morton, 2010:94). The GST and gender developmental theory pay much attention to gender concepts, instead of focusing on the mechanism by which gender-related concepts are obtained and decoded. Knowing a stereotype does not necessarily mean that one strives to behave in accordance with it (Bandura, 1986:231).

#### 2.2.4 Gender Socialisation

Previous research specifies that girls and boys acquire sex-appropriate behaviours through the process of socialisation, specifically gender socialisation (Haralambos & Helborn, 2008:4).

Socialisation is the process by which people, especially from a young age, learn the culture of their society (DeGregory, 2008:30). During this period, they learn the norms, values, customs, behaviours and environmental laws that are deemed valuable by society (Haralambos & Helborn, 2008:4).

Gender socialisation is an aspect of socialisation that is triggered by the birth of a child. Ferree and Hall (1996:935) define gender socialisation as an “ongoing, multi-level process of social interactions, control and struggles that sustain and subvert gender systems”. Gender is not a creation of an individual, but it is a product of societies (Macionis & Plummer, 2012:391). This implies that when children are born, they are deliberately socialised into a gender role according to their sexes (Smith, 2010:5). During this process, children are taught what it is to be female or male (Handle, Cahill & Elkin, 2007:189). For example, boys are taught to play with cars, encouraged to be brave, and are allocated men’s duties, roles and responsibilities, while girls are taught to play with dolls, to make food, and are allocated women’s roles and responsibilities.

Chege and Sifuna (2006:1) posit that for children to conform to the socially gendered labels, individuals are compelled to fit into predetermined stereotypical models of masculinity and femininity. Gender is used as a form of identity and acceptance within a community. The main drivers of gender socialisation are the family, the school, peers, and various other agencies that influence children to behave in gendered ways, particularly the family. The following section discusses the role of the family, the peers, and school in influencing gender roles and responsibilities.

### **2.2.5 Patterns of Gender Socialisation Prior to Migration**

This section explores the patterns of gender role socialisation in children’s home countries prior to migration, as well as the gendered enrolment patterns at schools in some countries. The general assumption is that in African countries, specifically those neighbouring South Africa, parents raise their children in similar ways because of their cultural and historical ties. Quinn (2005:484) states that there are certain universally shared cultural models of child-rearing that explain how society everywhere raises its children. Due to their geographical proximity, the people of Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Swaziland share similar cultures, languages, ethnicity, religions, and arts, and as such, they may share similar child-rearing patterns.

Historically, these countries have contributed the bulk of people who migrate to South Africa, so it is within this context that the research aims to review gender role socialisation with the aim of establishing gendered experiences at home and school. However, in recent years, particularly, post-1994, there has been a huge influx of immigrants from other African countries, such as the DRC, Nigeria, Ghana, and Ethiopia, to name just a few.

Despite some similarities in cultures and traditions highlighted above, with a combined population of 52 090 992 million (SADC, 2018:1), Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe have diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious groups (Gebrekidan, 2010:91). Despite some cultural similarities, each country has its own cultures and traditions, and in any discussion of a country, one cannot generalise about the diverse cultural, ethnic and religious groups of the region. Gender is a dynamic concept and gender socialisation varies greatly from one culture to another and from one social group to another within a single culture (McGinn & Oh, 2015:40). The value of this study is premised on its potential to identify traditional patterns linked to contextual gender role socialisation practices and patterns that encourage gendered experiences. The following section discusses gender socialisation patterns in the home countries of immigrants.

#### 2.2.5.1 Gendered influence of the family during socialisation

The family plays a significant role in the gender role formation of children during the early stages of their lives, and this is significant in the development of intellectual and social skills. The family teaches children the beliefs and preferences about gender, and directly influences children's cognitive and social development (Dohmen, Falk, Huffman & Sunde, 2012:645). Children spend most of their time at home and at school, and this means that most of their experiences take place in these two institutions. As such, it is appropriate to identify the functions of the family and how it perpetuates gender disparities through the process of gender socialisation.

One of the main functions of the family is to socialise children according to their gender. Within the family, from an early age, children are exposed to gendered norms and cultural patterns of what it is to be a boy or a girl. In her ethnographic study, Poluha (2004:22) states that in some parts of Africa, child-rearing, or the patterns of relationships between children and adults, are clearly hierarchical. Parents and children know their positions within the family, and parents exercise control over their children.

Furthermore, gender roles and relationships are explicitly and clearly demarcated, starting with the husband and wife and extending to children. These relationships are characterised by a specific way of living (Donati, 2006:5), and gender differences are constructed through a process that is biological, but also relational and social (Spjeldnes, Koeske & Sales, 2010:338). The father-mother biological factor within the family is important because it defines male and female roles in the family, which enable children to be socialised according to the genders of their parents.

The exposure to what it means to be a male or female comes from a child's parents, and the process is triggered during pregnancy. In some African societies, the gendering of children starts in the womb, when traditional practitioners' subject pregnant women to certain behavioural and food taboos (Annan-Yao, 1998:4). Clear lines of gender preferences are spelt out at this early stage, and some African fathers simply prefer to have boys rather than girls in their families. For example, in the highly patriarchal communities of Southern Africa, when men are asked how many children they have, they only give the number of their sons, and totally neglect to include any daughters born to them (Annan-Yao, 1998:4). Hoffman's (1977:8) study on the preference for male children established that parents were more likely to continue having children if they only had girls, which was not the case if they had only boys.

Most traditional African parents are fixated on the importance of "family name syndrome", which implies that boys are preferable because they continue to carry the family name. When women were interviewed and asked why they preferred boys to girls, they revealed that this was because they wanted to please their husbands, and that sons carry on the family name and are companions to the husbands (Hank, 2007:157). In traditional African families, women are responsible for socialising both boys and girls. Within families, girls are socialised to become future wives while boys are prepared to become future husbands. This is achieved by deliberately exposing both sexes to their specific gender roles and responsibilities. For example, girls are exposed to roles that include food production and preparation, fetching water, and collecting firewood over long distances. In addition, they also engage in household chores such as house cleaning and taking care of their younger siblings.

In Swazi traditional families, girls are expected to perform all the household chores, which include cooking, fetching water, washing dishes and clothes, and taking care of their younger siblings in the family (UNICEF Swaziland, 2009:369). Furthermore, girls are encouraged to be strong and are expected to get married later in life. On the other hand, boys are taught how to

fend for the family, to herd cattle and to protect the family. Boys are given masculine tasks such as herding cattle, hunting, and house construction (Barker, 2006:211). They are also expected to marry and have families. In performing their gender roles, obedience and politeness are the overriding goals in raising children in traditional African families (Siwela, 2011:12). Children are socialised to accomplish their gendered responsibilities without compromise, and any deviation from their prescribed duties may attract critical sanctions.

The family also teaches boys to be resilient: not to cry, not to fear, not to be forgiving, but rather to be assertive and strong (UNICEF, 2009:369). In contrast, girls are encouraged to be tolerant, not to be demanding, to be accommodating, and to be “ladylike” (UNICEF, 2002:5). This is an indication that girls should be nurturing and show empathy in dealing with any situation they encounter. The traditional families in African countries encourage boys to exercise autonomy, while girls are socialised to be dependent on other people (Ram, Strohschein & Gaur, 2014:6). According to the World Bank (2011:24), boys should make tough decisions, even if it is against familial ties, while girls, to a large degree, have to accept and consent to them.

While research regarding the dominant modes of child socialisation began some years ago, recent research by Poluha (2004:4; 2007:7) and Alemayehu (2007:10) has shown the continuity of the hierarchical nature of gender socialisation in traditional African societies. Alemayehu (2007:10) asserts that strict patterns of gender role socialisation are still applied both in rural and urban areas, although the extent and degree may vary. However, once the families and their children move to another country, they may be forced to shift their gender socialisation patterns to fit into the cultural values and social demands of the host countries. In most instances, parental socialisation patterns of a migrant’s country of origin are challenged and altered. This is mostly the case with migrant families, because the cultural values that the parents have practised in their countries of origin, and the way in which they have been socialised, are markedly different from those in South Africa (Bar-Yosef, 2003:231; Poluha, 2004:7). These new value systems and the environmental composition of the host country are often incongruent and incompatible with the cultural values that migrants bring with them. One such value system is the preference of parents between girls and boys.

From the above discussions, parents prefer boys to girls. This may inhibit girls’ social and cultural development and prevent them from being included in educational programmes. This exclusion may result in lowered gendered expectations and aspirations for girls. Furthermore,

household chores are gendered because they are allocated according to the child's gender. This affects girls' and boys' opportunities to learn and to attend school because they must spend time performing domestic duties instead of learning or attending school. For example, among the Maasai people in Tanzania, boys are often allocated duties to herd cattle and other domestic animals at a tender age of between 8 and 9 years (Temba, Warioba & Msabila, 2013:21). In situations where the socioeconomic conditions of the family are not stable, boys are required to leave school and look for work to fend for the family.

Just like boys, girls are often allocated gender roles that require them to fetch water some distance away from their homes or perform other family chores before they start their school day. As a result, they often get tired and may opt out of school. A study conducted in Tanzania found that there was a 12% increase in school attendance and an increase in enrolment when water was available within a 15-minute radius, compared to when it was fetched at a place that was situated an hour away (Wamahiu & Ombima, 1992:12). Girls often must care for their younger siblings and ill family members, and as a result, they may not go to school or may opt not to enrol at all.

#### 2.2.5.2 Gendered influence of peers during socialisation

When children register at school, the space of social interaction provides a major area in which gender role development takes place (Molla, 2016:2). When children are at school, and specifically in the intermediate and senior phases, they tend to make friends and form groups. The formation of friendships is fundamental to the growth of the child's cognitive and social being. However, within these groups, children exert strong influence on each other's development, specifically in gender role development. Children develop friendships with both same-sex and opposite-sex peers, and continue to develop ideas, and receive reinforcement of previously learned ideas (Poulin & Pedersen, 2007:1484). It has been said that peer interaction is not a preparation for life; it is life itself (Lamb & Sutton-Smith, 1982:75). This implies that gender role development is important for both boys and girls because gender parity will essentially be productive for children and society at large. Admittedly, the family exerts the most powerful influence on the development of the child's concept of gender, their own gender, and how they express gender (Davidson, Payne, Maltz & Rabow, 2015:1). In a similar way, the school becomes an important structure outside the family that tends to repeat and instil the cultural labels and values into which children have been socialised at family and community levels (Kangethe, Lyria & Nyanzanga, 2014:1857). The school setting, via teachers and peers,

is responsible for gender differences between girls and boys. Teachers facilitate children's gender biases by marking gender as important when they use it to label and organise students (Molla, 2016:2). Meanwhile, peers use different strategies to influence, encourage and/or promote gendered differences between girls and boys.

The interaction among peers constitutes a major determinant in gender socialisation in schools (Stromquist, 2007:24). When children are at school, the development and determination of who they are, take centre stage. The development of identity formation is facilitated during the child's interaction with teachers and significant others through various channels. Identity is developed during teaching and learning situations, while engaging in play with other children of the same age, and through sporting activities. Handel (1988:232) argued that a child's social interaction with people their own age is a highly significant socialisation factor. During these interactions, children receive contradictory messages from significant others and adults; some messages may be positive, while others may be negative. Martin and Ruble (2010:355) are of the view that as early as the preschool years, children receive positive reinforcement from their gender peers for engaging in gender-typed activities. The praises children get for sticking to traditional gender roles, beliefs, and actions, have been found to be even stronger than parental reinforcement (Katz & Walsh, 1991:338). Goetz and Grant (1988:183) concur that peer networks are more supportive of traditional gender arrangements than are school personnel. They also posit that parental support is relevant to older children because they imagine themselves to be adults. Arguably, the beliefs in traditional gender role behaviour are dynamic rather than constant, owing to technology advances, which expose children to television and other sources that discourage or encourage certain types of behaviour. Within the school peer groups, behaviour takes many forms, with some groups being pro-school establishment while others are anti-school establishment.

Gender role socialisation is well defined in children's play where the differences between girls and boys are visible. According to Thorne (1993:40), peer groups engage in gender-typed games, and the interactions between boys and girls engaging in gender-divided play send gender-related messages about sexuality and aggressiveness. He gives an example of a chasing game in which boys frequently snap girls' bra straps. In general, boys' interactions are rougher and more active, while girls' interactions stress cooperative behaviour among playmates (Fabes, Martin & Hanish, 2003:922). When children are exposed to contrasting behaviours and relate to each other in a different way, this encourages gendered experiences. Furthermore, the type of play between girls and boys is dissimilar, with boys' play generally exhibiting rough



and tumble activity. Due to gender-typed behaviours, the differences between girls and boys are distinct. It is generally assumed that boys also like to engage in more competitive play than girls, and that girls' play is structured and does not demand a lot of energy, and as a result, boys interpret girls' play as less boisterous (Dreber, von Essen & Ranehill, 2011:567). This general assumption is that each group does not enjoy and appreciate the other's type of play. In research conducted in the US, Fagot, Hagan, Leinbach, & Kronsberg, (1985: 32) noted that girls stated that they found boys' play unenjoyable and boring. In an earlier study on gender as a social category in America, Maccoby (2000:11) made similar findings.

Girls and boys hold different opinions about each other. In an American study, Espinosa (2006:103) asked girls and boys to write an essay titled: *How would your life change if you were the other sex?* The study found that girls wrote about how they would engage in adventurous activities and attain prominence. On the other hand, many boys did not attempt to answer the question, while one boy wrote that he would commit suicide if ever he was a girl. A similar study conducted in Peru also found that numerous boys believed that men were better at mathematics than women, and that politics was a man's job, while they apportioned domestic responsibilities to women (Espinosa, 2015:39, 103). The two studies revealed the wide extent of differences between girls and boys, and how gender continues to be viewed in a polarised way.

Girls and boys use language to communicate differently when interacting with one another. Boys' play is rough and physical, and because of the contact experienced during play, tensions and conflicts are likely to arise. In this situation, a boy learns how to negotiate conflict and how to be a team player (Merchant, 2012:16). Most of the play that girls partake in requires cooperation rather than competition, and thus they are likely to communicate one-on-one and learn the skills of listening (Rudman, & Glick, 2008:111). These peer interactions facilitate internalisation of values, feelings of affection towards each other, and relatedness or belongingness in students, and enhance the wellbeing of all involved (Osterman, 2000:325).

Furthermore, both girls and boys use language to express themselves to make their intentions known to their peers. For example, boys use verbal language as a tool to harass girls to demonstrate their strengths (Gruber & Fineran, 2016:112). According to Crick, Bigbee and Howes (1996:244), both girls and boys agree that boys are more likely to show physical aggression as a means of settling issues or scores. It is widely acknowledged that boys initiate more conflicts than girls and are likely to solve such conflicts with physical aggression or

threats (Blumenfeld & Cooper, 2010:115). According to Francis (2000:39), boys use vulgar expressions to vilify girls. In contrast, girls use language to cooperate and solve problems amicably, the reason being that many people disapprove of girls showing aggressive behaviour. Other children dislike confrontational attitudes, especially when it comes from girls, and for that reason, girls with aggressive behaviours are likely to be shunned (Putallaz & Bierman, 2004:330). However, this does not mean that girls are absolved from using derogatory language. Follingstad, Coyne and Gambone (2005:30) stated that girls are more likely to abuse others verbally than boys. They also note that boys are found to talk very loudly, are destructive, and tend to dominate space in the classroom. Many of the traits that friends try to dissuade their friends from, such as using assertiveness, decisiveness and independence are necessary to prepare one for a future career, and unfortunately for girls, they are denied the development of these characteristics from an earlier age. Crick, Ostrov and Kawabata (2007:250) also observed that both girls and boys may verbally insult each other when there is a dispute.

Girls and boys set conditions for each other to be accepted or to be incorporated into a peer group, and they sanction members who do not meet the group's requirements. This means that for an individual to belong to or to be accepted into a group, that individual must follow set rules or at least ensure that their behaviour is congruent with the group's norms and values. Failure to follow the group's norms means that an individual will be excluded from the group, prevent individuals from participating in the group's activities altogether, and sometimes denied permission to converse with any of the group's members (Crick et al., 2007:250). A British study observing teacher and student behaviours in class examined how girls and boys constructed gender and found that in a classroom situation, boys were constantly challenged to be active, aggressive, competitive and interested in heterosexual contests (Francis, 2002:39). The study also found that there was an improved perception and attitude toward the status of girls; for example, that boys were no longer viewed as superior, and girls displayed assertiveness and confidence in their academic abilities (Francis, 2000:39).

Another British study on the construction of gender and sexual identities between girls and boys at primary school found that girls who devoted much of their time to academic excellence were labelled as "square girls" (Renold, 2005:40). The label "square" means that the girls were hailed with insults and denigrated for breaching traditional limits of maleness and femaleness. While other students saw this as a break in tradition, research indicates that it is now more permissible for girls to be tomboys than for boys to be sissies (Jackson, 2009:690). This simply

reflects changing attitudes and denotes that school children are becoming less rigid in their gender stereotyping as they mature (Martin, Fabes, Hanish & Hollenstein, 2005:299). Credit should be accorded to girls who have managed to cross traditional borders to venture into boys' territory. Carter and Patterson (1982:812) state that girls have not been found to have the same preferences for stereotypical female activities, while boys have been found to have an increased preference for male stereotyped activities (Martin et al., 2005:299). In this context, it is evident that gender socialisation contributes to children's gendered experiences and affects their enrolment patterns in schools in their countries of origin.

#### 2.2.5.3 Gendered school and social environment

The school is one of the main socialisation agents that complement the family, and as such, children are exposed to gendered role patterns that influence gendered behaviours, experiences, attitudes, and actions. The school setting is responsible for the creation and preservation of gender differences between girls and boys with teachers directly and/or indirectly transmitting messages related to sex-role development (Mhlauli, 2010:137). When children initially attend school, they have already been exposed to gender role socialisation in their home environments. However, once they start school, educational factors that influence the acquisition of gender become more complicated and structured (Cavanaugh, 2002:66). The number of people that children socialise with increases to include their peers and teachers, and this has significant ramifications for children's acquisition of beliefs, behaviours, and attitudes regarding gender.

The teacher becomes an important component of the child's social setting. Thus, schools are sites of strong socialisation of gender roles, as the lessons that children learn about gender affect how they think and what they believe about "sex equality" (Cohen, 2013:7), and become the beliefs carried throughout their lives. Beliefs about gender are pervasive in schools and are characterised by the differences between girls and boys. The gender attitudes and beliefs manifested during interaction between the teacher and children at school, and the genders of the teacher and children could play a significant role in the formulation process of gendered acquisition (Mhlauli, 2010:137).

While a larger number of female teachers than male teachers are celebrated as a victory in gender parity, specifically in primary schools, Mukuna and Mutsotso (2011:137) propose that the dominance of female teachers over male teachers has led to the socially and culturally ascribed roles for women as primary care givers of young children spilling over into the educational arena. He further states that the dominance of female teachers impacts negatively

on boys' gender role development because boys may not relate effectively to female teachers. Therefore, Evans and Jones (2008:650) argue for an increase in the number of male teachers in primary schools where boys are disenfranchised in terms of appropriate role models.

In their study, Carrington, Tymms and Merrel (2008:315) examined gender effects on attitudes in 9 to 11-year-old children in Britain where more than half of them were boys. These children attended 413 classes, of which 113 were taught by men, and 300 by women (Carrington et al., 2008:315). They found that both girls and boys had more positive attitudes towards school if they had a female teacher as opposed to a male teacher. This finding means that female teachers may bring out the best in both girls and boys, which dispels the notion that a teacher's gender may have a great influence on how girls and boys acquire gendered attitudes and behaviours. Additionally, female teachers tend to benefit girls in the school setting, as they act as a source of information on the acquisition of gender-related behaviours and perceptions (Evans & Le Nestour, 2019:2). Female teachers also protect girls against male hegemony and act as role models.

The argument of role modelling is well documented and researched in relation to boys with some researchers pointing out that boys do not have sufficient exposure to male role models in the classroom because primary schools are dominated by female teachers (Carrington et al., 2008:315; Lam, Lee & Mizerski, 2009:55). Evans and Jones (2008:4) advocated for an increase in the number of men in primary education due to what they perceived to be the detrimental effect of the dominance of women in the early schooling of boys. Thornton and Bricheno (2008:717) recommended providing appropriate role models for boys, to ensure that the teaching force is reflective of the balance of gender in society (Montecinos & Nielsen, 1997:47). Akman, Taskin, Ozden, Okyay and Cortu (2013:21) are of the view that male teachers act as substitute father figures for those children with absent fathers. Allison, Gosse and Parr (2014:18) concur that male teachers are important role models for boys in the classrooms, especially for under-achieving and disengaged boys, who may not have a role model at home. Male primary-school teachers can often be stable and reliable figures in the lives of the children that they teach (Byron, 2008:1). A lack of male teachers is associated with antisocial behaviour in schools. It also exacerbates boys' problems at school because of insufficient role models (Hamilton & Jones, 2014:13). Therefore, according to Golombok and Fivush (1994:422), researchers stress the importance of a role model because theories of gender development have indicated that the development of gender identity arises out of children's observations of same-sex role models.

Young and Brozo (2001:3) further stress that boys and girls learn to “do” gender from the social interactions and contexts that influence their daily experiences, such as home, school, sports, society, and the media. To prove the effectiveness of male role models, McGrath and Sinclair (2013:22) conducted a study based on the gender of primary-school teachers in Australia, and they found that a teacher’s gender does not indicate a statistically significant difference in terms of students being affected by the absence of male teachers in school.

Young and Brozo (2001:3) are of the view that both sexes are important in the teaching field, irrespective of their femaleness or maleness. He argues that both have a role to play in the transmission of gendered beliefs and attitudes to both girls and boys in the classroom, and the teachers’ intentions are to interact with both sexes. Byron (2008:314) views both female and male teachers as playing important roles in schools, because they work to address the gender balance and to ensure the healthy development of girls and boys. In a similar study conducted in Botswana, Mhlauli (2010:137) explored the conceptualisations and practices of gender issues among social studies teachers in primary schools and found that teachers perceived boys and girls to be the same, and they were accorded the same treatment.

The amount of attention given to girls and boys, irrespective of whether they are female or male, is important in that teachers interact more often with boys than girls in a school setting. There is evidence that boys and girls are socialised differently (Mhlauli, 2010:137). According to Measor and Sikes (1992:73), teachers interact more often with boys than girls by a margin of 10% to 30%, depending on the grade level of the children, and the teacher’s personality. This is well pronounced in instances of teachers dealing with disciplinary issues concerning girls and boys.

Kalis, Vannest and Parker (2007:23) state that classroom management strategies are powerful socialisation agents, and the teachers’ use of disciplinary strategies may reinforce suitable roles that are different for boys and girls. Erden and Wolfgang (2003:521) studied pre-kindergarten and first grade teachers’ beliefs about appropriate disciplinary practices to establish whether teachers were an important part of children’s socialisation, particularly in correcting children’s wayward behaviours. The findings showed that a teacher’s approach to discipline depended on the child’s gender in the sense that if the culprit was a boy, the teacher adopted a confrontational style, but if it was a girl, the teacher applied a contractual style.

According to Eiden and Wolfgang (2003:521), teachers socialise children according to their gender; they discipline girls through reasoning, while at the same time they discipline boys

through the cause-and-effect method. The fact that children are treated differently may lead to different experiences for boys and girls. Thus, teachers reliably influence the development of contrasting gendered experiences by treating girls and boys differently in teaching and learning situations (Arnot, 2002:9).

While teachers may apply a confrontational style to discipline boys, they acknowledge that boys and girls are different physically and behaviourally, and they often consider the boys' bad behaviours as normal. Teachers often use the expression 'boys will always be boys' to explain away the problems boys create in the classroom situation. As a result, of the expression 'boys will always be boys', teachers often ignore appropriate behaviours of boys, while with girls they ignore inappropriate behaviours. According to Kalis et al. (2007:23), teachers tend to praise girls for 'good' behaviour, regardless of its relevance to the context or to what is being learned, and they often criticise boys for 'bad' or inappropriate behaviour. In the same way, the way girls are heaped with accolades implies that teachers glorify girls "to make them seem more good than they are", and to elevate their goodness above their academic performance (Kalis et al., 2007:23). At the same time, the criticism of boys means that boys are more "bad than they may really be".

Teachers provide differentiated feedback and treatment to children based on whether they are a girl or a boy. Gunderson, Ramirez, Levine and Beilock (2012:153) believe that teachers do not give low-achieving girls the necessary attention. These researchers examined teachers and their interactions with students, particularly how teachers interacted with low- and high-achieving students. They found that teachers paid less attention to students with low abilities, asked them lower level questions, and when the students answered incorrectly, they moved on. Kuklinski and Weinstein (2001:556) found similar results. Furthermore, Kuklinski and Weinstein (2001:554) found that low-achieving girls were often ignored in the classroom.

The responses and feedback given to children by teachers perpetuate the cultural views and expectations that are expressed by society based on one's gender. Some teachers hold the traditional gender stereotype that mathematics is a boys' subject and that girls are incapable of achieving in the subject. Boys' activities are biased towards physical and mental toughness needed in mathematics, sciences, and technical subjects, as they require the application of the mind or physical strength and power (Chege & Sifuna, 2006:282). As role models that hold such gender stereotypes, teachers transfer these notions to girls and boys in the classroom. Some female teachers also exhibit a fear of mathematics. According to Gilah and Forgasz

(2003:95), traditional teachers may reflect these beliefs in classroom practices, and this is internalised by children who may also hold the same views or negative attitudes towards mathematics. Spencer, Steele and Quinn (1999:10) concur that girls, in particular, may share the gender role beliefs that their teacher propounds, such as mathematics being a boy's "strong suit", and as a result, these girls may develop anxiety and conform to negative stereotypes about girls doing well in mathematics, which then translate into low achievement.

A lack of interest in certain subjects is not only restricted to mathematics in school, but also extends to other learning areas such as science. In a study that examined a lack of female participation in science and mathematics in higher education, Fox (2006:13) found that women were not taken seriously when it came to the teaching and learning of mathematics and science subjects. He concluded that if women were not taken seriously as students in these subjects, they were less likely to aspire to enter the fields of mathematics and science as preferred career choices. Furthermore, it is assumed that subjects such as the home economics, languages and social sciences socialise female learners towards professions considered feminine, as they have their roots in care-giving roles (Chenge & Sifuna, 2006:282). This exposure to gender stereotypes has the propensity to affect learners' views of themselves and may adversely affect their self-confidence. There is a widely held view that educators should rise to the challenge of sex stereotyping to free learners from gender-prescribed social inequalities.

In conclusion, the Wisconsin Model of Status Attainment postulates that children form their gendered educational and occupational aspirations through gender socialisation, with major influences coming from parents, peers, and teachers (Mahaffy & Ward, 2002:403). Teachers influence educational ambitions and expectations, while parents influence both the educational and occupational aspirations, and function as role models with respect to both domains (Bian, Leslie & Cimpian, 2017:389). During the time that children are at school, educational schemas and general behaviour and association on gender are formed, which helps to explain why children generally behave according to their assigned gender. Gender development theories also help to explain why social relationships are formed on the basis of being the same sex, and explain why girls are closer to teachers, particularly female teachers, while boys are more likely to keep their distance (Martin & Ruble, 2010:353).

The social relationship is governed by gender identity and influences how these behaviours are acquired in the first place. Gendered same-sex relationships also help to clarify why gangs and bullying are rampant in schools and communities, specifically in communities with a low

socioeconomic status (Nation, Vieno, Perkins & Santinello, 2008:211). Gender theories also make us aware of the choices that children make about objects and items at home and school. It also helps us to understand why girls and boys exhibit different behaviours in class, and how these behaviours influence teachers' attitudes and behaviours towards boys and girls. Generally, gender development theories are important components in this research because they assist in explaining the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools.

## **2.3 GENDER ENROLMENT PATTERNS IN SELECTED SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT (SADC) COUNTRIES**

This section briefly examines the gender arrangement in primary and secondary schools in Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. These countries were selected because of their proximity to South Africa and have many immigrant families and children in South African schools.

### **2.3.1 Gendered Enrolment Patterns at Primary and Secondary Schools in Countries of Origin**

The gendered enrolment patterns and gaps in primary and secondary schools are premised on Article 14, Gender Equality in Education of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development report (SADC, 2011: 5). The objectives and goals of the Gender Protocol are stipulated as follows:

1. State Parties shall, by 2015, enact laws that provide equal access to and retention in primary, secondary, vocational, and non-formal education in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Chipika, 2015: 14); and
2. State Parties shall, by 2015, adopt and implement gender-sensitive educational policies and programmes addressing gender stereotypes in education and gender-based violence, among others (Morna & Nyakujarah, 2011:56; SADC, 2013:7).

*Article 14: Gender Equality in Education* highlights factors that promote enrolment and retention of girls and boys in schools. Despite its brevity, the Article advocates the provision of equal access to education for all. It appeals to all member countries to pass laws that support equal access to and retention in primary, secondary, vocational, and non-formal education (Morna & Nyakujarah, 2011:56; SADC, 2008:6; SADC, 2015:39). It recognises that there are



factors that stimulate and discourage the enrolment of girls and boys at various stages of schooling. Decreasing gender gaps at primary and secondary school levels pose a serious policy challenge to many SADC member states. Strategies that have been used to address the gender gaps in education include the implementation of Article 14 on Gender in Education and Development (Morna & Nyakujarah, 2011:56; SADC, 2008:6; SADC, 2015:39)

The following section outlines gender enrolment patterns in primary and secondary schools and explores the factors that SADC and selected SADC member states employ to address gender gaps. It also discusses the influence of peers on gender socialisation and looks at the gender deployment of teachers, and the contributions that they make in schools.

Table 2.1: Gendered primary-school enrolment patterns prior to migration

Country	% Female	% Male
Botswana	90	90
Lesotho	82	80
Mozambique	80	82
Swaziland	78	79
Zimbabwe	75	73
South Africa	99	98

Source: (SADC, 2013:7-8)

The enrolment pattern illustrated in Table 2.1 is gendered in the sense that, generally, girls outnumber boys in school enrolment rates in these SADC countries. Botswana and South Africa topped the list of countries with over 90% of enrolment for both boys and girls in primary school (SADC, 2013:7). Botswana had a 90% enrolment rate for both girls and boys, while Lesotho had 82% and 80% enrolment rate for girls and boys respectively (SADC, 2013:8). Mozambique had an enrolment rate of 80% for girls and 82% for boys. Swaziland's enrolment stood at 78% for girls, and 79% enrolment for boys, respectively. Zimbabwe's enrolment was listed as 75% for girls and 73% for boys. South Africa had an enrolment rate of 99% for girls and 98% for boys respectively, the highest in all the countries on the table (SADC, 2013:8).

### **2.3.2 An Overview of Gendered Enrolment Rates at Primary Schools in Selected Countries**

The school enrolments for boys and girls in the five selected SADC countries have been equal. However, there is a variation in the percentage of enrolments between these countries with

respect to gender. South Africa and Botswana have the highest percentages of children enrolled at school, with almost equal representation of girls and boys, which is above 90%. The high and equal representation in enrolment patterns in these countries may be indicators of economic stability and high government investment in education. The two countries are also economically strong, politically stable, and have sound education policies that promote access and gender parity in schools.

#### 2.4.2.1 South Africa

According to Stats SA (2015:7), since 2002, South Africa has achieved gender parity in the enrolment of girls and boys in primary school. This is evident in Table 2.1 where enrolment for both girls and boys in 2013 was 99% and 98% respectively. Since 2002, the rate of participation of girls increased from 90.2% to 97.5% in 2013 (Stats SA, 2014: 15). This shows an increase in primary school enrolment for girls and highlights an opportunity for those immigrant children who come to South Africa for educational opportunities, since they might have been denied access to school previously in their home countries.

#### 2.4.2.2 Botswana

In Botswana, an increase in enrolment for both girls and boys indicates the achievement of universal primary education introduced in 1980, which led to the abolition of school fees and created educational opportunities for all those who wish to attend school (Tsie, 1997:46). According to Tsie (1997:46), the success of the Primary Education Improvement Programme was facilitated by Botswana's economic boom in the 1980s, the Gender Equality Policy of 1996, and the adoption of the MDGs that are also highlighted in the Regional Indicative Sustainable Development Plan (Saito, 2010:20).

The major tenets of the MDGs were to ensure that all boys and girls completed a full course of primary school by 2015 (United Nations, 2006:7), while the SADC (2015: 12) advocated the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015 (UN, 2006:4). Table 2.1 shows that by 2013, Botswana's enrolment by gender reached 90% for both boys and girls. McGillivray (2008:319) notes that in terms of decreasing gender imbalances in education by 2015, Botswana has made remarkable progress. According to the Botswana Central Statistical Office (2010:16) and the UN (2006:8), in general terms, particularly with respect to achieving access to primary education, Botswana has moved closer to achieving the goal of gender equity in education.

#### 2.4.2.4 Lesotho

The equal increase in the number of enrolment of girls and boys in Lesotho can be attributed to the MDGs, which, inter alia, sought to: (a) achieve universal primary education; and (b) promote gender equality and empower women (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013:24). Indicator 2A of Universal Primary Education stated that by 2013, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, would be able to complete a full course of primary schooling (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013:24). This was meant to consolidate the gains made by Lesotho government through its introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) policy in 2000, which allowed every girl and boy to attend school. The introduction of the FPE policy increased enrolments for both girls and boys, as indicated in Table 2.1. To consolidate free access to education, the Government of Lesotho further enacted the Education Act, 2010, making primary education not only free but also compulsory (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013:24). The overall enrolment for both girls and boys increased, reaching 81.8% in 2010, but declined to an average of 80% in 2013. The decrease in the enrolment percentage may be attributed to the increasing poverty and the distance that children have to travel between home and school (Bureau of Statistics, 2013:10). Additionally, the low enrolment for boys may reflect the burden of domestic chores in families. In Lesotho, boys are assigned duties such as herding livestock and working in the fields during the ploughing season. These domestic chores consume a lot of time that impact negatively on the boys' education.

Indicator 3.1 of the country's MDGs sought to promote gender equality and advocated an equal ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and tertiary education (UNFPA, 2013:33). This has enabled Lesotho to edge towards gender parity in primary education, with the number of girls and boys enrolled in schools almost equivalent (see Table 2.1). The FPE policy decreed equal access to primary school for women and men (Government of Lesotho, 2012:75; UNFPA, 2013:33), and is credited with increasing the country's literacy rates in general. The Government of Lesotho (2012:75) also reported that the literacy rate in the country was 87,4% for men and 98,82% for women, making Lesotho one of the most literate countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Bureau of Statistics, 2013:10).

#### 2.4.2.5 Mozambique

In Mozambique, the improvement in enrolment patterns at primary schools is linked to the country's commitment to the MDGs, as articulated by its goal to achieve universal primary education for all children by 2015 (Republic of Mozambique, 2006:1). However, before the

declaration of the MDGs, the Mozambican government had already implemented the Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty (PARPA) that was aimed at decreasing poverty from 54% to 45% in 2009 (Republic of Mozambique, 2006:1). The aim of PARPA was to improve the low achievement rates, ensure that girls and boys completed primary school education, and to provide infrastructure and facilities like schools in communities. PARPA was also infused with the MDGs, as prescribed by the United Nations, and was focused on eradicating gender imbalances in education. During the implementation of PARPA and the MDGs, the Mozambican government took a decision to abolish primary school fees at the first and second levels of primary education (EP1 and EP2) in 2005 (Republic of Mozambique, 2004:528). Prior to 2005, the government issued the Ministerial Decree 8/86 that spelt out how school fees were to be determined and paid at both primary and secondary schools. Prior to 2005, children in Mozambique paid fees for their education, a situation that resulted in low enrolment for both girls and boys (Avenstrup, Liang & Nellemann, 2004:5).

The Ministerial Decree 228/2004 abolished school fees (Republic of Mozambique, 2004: 528). This was a turning point in the history of education in Mozambique in terms of both gender equity and the provision of access to free education for all. According to SADC (2016:86), in 2002, Mozambique had an almost 50% enrolment rate for both girls and boys at primary schools, respectively. The enrolment rate continued to increase, and in 2005, when primary school fees were abolished, 60.2% of girls and 63.8% of boys were enrolled (SADC, 2016: 86). As reflected earlier in Table 2.1, in 2015, the enrolment rate increased to 85% for girls and 90% for boys. The higher percentage of male enrolments could be an indication of “male preference”; that is, it suggests that families prefer to send male children rather than female children to school. An increase in general school enrolment could also be linked to the government’s abolition of school fees and the implementation of the United Nations’ MDGs that promote gender equality and empower women.

#### 2.4.2.6 Zimbabwe

The low rate of primary school enrolment in Zimbabwe cannot be attributed to gender-related policies but could be linked to the country’s failed fiscal and macro-economic policies that affect the distribution of educational resources. The decline in economic activities in Zimbabwe has also impacted negatively on its enrolment patterns (Roy, Heuty & Letouzé 2009:31). During the 1980s, Zimbabwe spent close to eight times more of its fiscal allocation on education than Zambia and Malawi, and in turn, it had high rates of enrolment for both girls

and boys (Brock & Cammish, 1991:32). However, when the Zimbabwean economy was on a steep decline from 1997 to 2002, the government's spending on education also declined, and this affected enrolment patterns in schools. Masuko (2003:9) clarifies that before 1990, the enrolment for both girls and boys stood at 387,600 and then plummeted to 252,000 in 1997 for all Grade 7 classes when Zimbabwe was experiencing severe economic strain. This means that 135,600 learners did not complete school between Grades 1 and 7 in 1990, 116,621 in 1997, 122,822 in 1998, 86,907 in 1999, 105,000 in 2000, and 134,933 in 2001 (Masuko, 2003:9). This means that children leave school at the end of each year without completing the grade in which they were registered.

In 1997, when the education sector was allocated 9% of the annual budget, there were 166,468 Grade 5 girls and 168,949 boys enrolled in primary schools nationally (Masuko, 2003: 9). A close look at boys' and girls' enrolments indicates that boys outnumbered girls at primary school level in 1997. In 1998, when education budget allocation was reduced to 8,3% of the national budget, the enrolment was 171,591 for boys and 165,849 for girls (Masuko, 2003:9). While the enrolment of boys increased by 2,742 learners, the enrolment of girls declined by 519 learners during the same period. An increase in boys' enrolment and the decline for girls may reflect parents' or families' preference to send sons rather than daughters to school. Furthermore, when the 1999 education budget was reduced to 6.2% of the annual budget, there was a decline in enrolment rates for both genders (African Development Bank, 2002:12).

In 1999, there were 167,131 boys and 163,716 girls enrolled in Grade 5, respectively. This means that compared to 1998, the enrolment of boys decreased by 4,460, while that of girls declined by 2,135. This decline indicates that there is a strong correlation between poverty, fiscal policies, and a drop in enrolment for both sexes. As a result of poverty, families prefer to send sons rather than daughters to school. A decrease in enrolments in Zimbabwe could also indicate many dropouts for both sexes for a variety of reasons. Table 2.1 indicates that more girls (75%) than boys (73%) were enrolled in Zimbabwe in 2015 (SADC, 2013:9). This could be linked to the fact that the country experienced more stable economic growth due to the 2008 to 2013 Government of National Unity that allowed families to recover from the economic problems they had previously experienced (Masuko, 2003:9).

#### 2.4.2.7 Swaziland

In Swaziland, the enrolment rates by gender in 2013 were significantly impressive considering the patriarchal nature of the Swazi society. Table 2.1 indicates that 78% of girls and 79% of

boys were enrolled in primary schools (SADC, 2013:9). One would have thought that families in Swaziland would prefer sons and expect them to enjoy a higher enrolment than daughters. There are few statistics provided for gender enrolment patterns in Swaziland. An increase in enrolment for both sexes may be a result of educational initiatives, education policies adopted by the Swazi government, and changed family attitudes towards educating female children.

Increases in enrolment patterns in general, and gender, may be linked to sound education policies and the government's initiative to devise appropriate strategies. Some strategies that were introduced by the Swazi government to improve access to education for all Swazis include the National Education for All (EFA) (World Bank, 2013:21), the MDGs, the Education Sector Strategic Plan, and the Educator and Training Sector Policy in 2011.

The goal of Swaziland's EFA 2015 was to increase participation at primary school level and ensure that 95.6% of age-appropriate primary school-going children accessed primary education in 2012 (Ministry of Education and Training, 2010:18). The MDGs were formulated by the United Nations, with some of their basic principles being to promote gender equality and empower women by 2015 (World Bank, 2010:31). Swaziland's Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) and the Education and Training Sector policy's objectives were designed to provide an equitable and inclusive education system that affords all Swazi citizens access to FPE (Ministry of Education and Training, 2007:10). In line with these policies and initiatives, the Government of Swaziland introduced FPE in 2010 (World Bank, 2011:12). All these policies and initiatives are guided by Swaziland's National Constitution of 2005, which affirms that education is a human right (Ministry of Education and Training, 2007:10), and further declares that education shall be "free and compulsory" (World Bank, 2010:36).

The implementation of some policies and strategic initiatives on gender has led to an increase in enrolment for both sexes. For example, a survey conducted in 2004 just after the Swazi government abolished school fees at primary school level, established that there was a 15% increase in enrolment for both sexes in 2003 (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2012:15). The 2012 education census revealed that the introduction of government-funded education enabled about 75% of children to enrol in primary education (Central Statistics Office Swaziland, 2012:32). Furthermore, the survey revealed that the enrolment pattern in Swazi primary education was almost equal for both boys and girls, at a ratio of 1:1 (Central Statistics Office Swaziland, 2012:32). The statistics also revealed that the gender enrolment pattern has remained the same since 2002, with an average of 0.93% more boys than

girls attending school (Central Statistics Office Swaziland, 2007:1). Swaziland is unique in that the number girls of school-going age exceed the corresponding number of boys. According to the Central Statistics Office Swaziland (2007:1), in Swaziland, the ratio of girls to boys of school-going age is 1:01. This suggests that while boys enjoy a higher enrolment, girls are still at a disadvantage considering that girls of school-going age generally outnumber boys of the same age cohort (Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland, 2017:4; Ministry of Education and Training, 2007:10). A conclusion that could be drawn from these imbalances in enrolment pattern is that parents still prefer to send their sons rather than their daughters to school.

Overall, the enrolment patterns outlined above could reflect the historical, geographical, political, and economic factors, the attitudes of parental decisions, family status, gender stereotypes, and education legislation in these countries. According to the SADC Gender and Development Monitor (SADC, 2016:34), a number of SADC countries have made significant improvements in addressing gender enrolment inequalities, particularly at primary school level, with Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe recording higher enrolments for girls than boys.

### **2.3.3 Gendered Secondary School Enrolment Patterns prior to Migration**

Table 2.2 indicates that some SADC countries have higher enrolments of girls than boys in primary school. It is of great concern that there are countries that still have admitted more boys than girls. However, the rate of enrolment at primary school is significantly high, with all the countries' enrolments above 70% for both girls and boys, which are encouraging. The high enrolment for both girls and boys at primary school levels could be credited to the successful implementation of Article 14 on Gender Equality in Education and other SADC member states' government strategies and initiatives. Nevertheless, the higher rate of enrolment for girls is abruptly ended when they enter secondary school (Lavy, 2008:21). In this study, the term 'secondary school' is used generally to include both junior secondary and senior secondary, which in some countries is called high school. According to the World Bank (2015: 22), many countries remained "seriously off target" for achieving the MDG 3: promote gender equality and empower women. They failed to end gender disparities, specifically in secondary school enrolment in 2015, and they are not expected to eliminate gender disparities in enrolment until at least 2030. True to the World Bank's predictions, Table 2.2 below shows that boys' secondary school enrolment rates are higher than girls in some Southern African countries, and because of this, ending gender disparity is likely to take much longer than anticipated.

Table 2.2: Secondary school enrolment patterns prior to migration for 2011

Country	%Female	%Male
Botswana	52	46
Lesotho	56	44
Mozambique	44	56
Swaziland	50	50
Zimbabwe	48	52
South Africa	54	46

Source: (SADC, 2011)

The gender gap at secondary school level is different from the disparity at primary school level. As Table 2.2 reflects, at secondary school level girls' enrolment rate decreases when compared to that of boys. Lesotho, Botswana and South Africa are the only countries that still maintain higher rates of enrolment for girls than boys in secondary school, although the difference is small. In Lesotho, the rate of female enrolment in secondary school is 56% while that of boys is 44%. This could be linked to the distribution of domestic chores, where boys' duties include, among others, herding livestock, and other forms of child labour. Botswana's secondary schools have an enrolment rate of 52% for girls and 46% for boys (SADC, 2011:7). The rate of enrolment in South African secondary schools is 54% for girls compared to 46% for boys. In Swaziland, the rate of enrolment for girls and boys is equal at 50%. This is consistent with primary school enrolment statistics reflected in Table 2.1, where girls' and boys' enrolment percentages are almost on par. Mozambique and Zimbabwe have substantially higher percentages of boys than girls in secondary school. The percentage of girls' enrolment is 44% against boys' enrolment of 56% at secondary school in Mozambique while Zimbabwe has 52% boys enrolled in secondary schools compared to 48% for girls.

#### 2.3.3.1 Comments on gendered enrolment patterns in secondary schools

Having analysed the trend in secondary school enrolment for girls and boys, the question that lingers is: Why do girls' enrolment figures decrease at high school level? Morna and Nyakujarah (2011:57) confirm that in some SADC countries, unlike primary schooling, secondary schooling is not free and compulsory. Unlike in South Africa where there are free-fees schools in all grades, secondary schooling is not free in Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Swaziland (World Data Bank, 2015:8). In such a scenario, families are left to decide the fate of their children's secondary education, that is, whether they send them to school or not. However, it is noted in some of these countries, there are financial assistance



programmes meant to make sure that no children fail to attend secondary school due to lack of funds (Swazi Legacy, 2011:13).

Many factors influence the families' decisions in terms of which child to send to secondary school, that is, the son or the daughter. In general, families must consider their socioeconomic status when deciding whether to send their daughters and/or sons to secondary school (Spaull & Taylor, 2015:23). The family's economic status is probably the strongest influencing factor in the decision concerning whether to grant girls rather than boys' access to education (SADC, 2001:21). When families are faced with economic challenges, they are more likely to educate their sons as opposed to their daughters. Research carried out in Kenya has shown that a decrease in girls' enrolment at secondary schools is linked to poverty (Mualuko, 2007:157). Similarly, a study conducted in Eritrea by Bahta (2016:17) found that parents felt that enrolling girls in school would limit their chances of finding an appropriate bridegroom. Furthermore, in some African countries, poverty forces many families to force their daughters into early marriages. In a study conducted on African families, Rossi and Rouanet (2015:66) found that parents preferred to send their sons rather than their daughters to school because they were unable to afford school fees, uniforms and stationery for both. In Zimbabwe, the increasing levels of poverty have also forced a growing number of both boys and girls to drop out of school to become hawkers, traders, and vendors (Mutavati, 2013:1). The tendency to socialise children according to their gender also contributes to low secondary school enrolment for girls (Elimu Yetu Coalition, 2005:106). As previously mentioned, within families, girls are taught female roles that work against them and deny them access to school. For example, girls are often expected to take care of their younger siblings and even their ailing parents. According to UNAIDS (2008:159), this is particularly the case in the era of HIV/AIDS. Sons may be required to leave the family and search for employment opportunities so that they can send back their earnings to take care of the family's needs.

Many societies still regard girls' roles to be confined to the home and see no need for them to attend school (Elimu Yetu Coalition, 2005:107). For example, a 2012 Plan study revealed that parents in Kenya married off their pregnant daughters to protect their family status and name rather than to wait for their child to give birth and return to school. In such societies, if girls can read and write, there is no need for them to further their education. In addition, girls' schooling robs mothers of an important partner at home, because the daughters usually help their mothers with domestic chores, and they look after their siblings while their mothers are not at home.

The low enrolment of girls at secondary school level could also be attributed to an inadequate provision of basic services. Lack of access to water and sanitation may force girls to drop out of school when they begin menstruating, because they cannot afford to buy sanitary products (UNAIDS, 2008:159). However, to alleviate the challenges posed by lack of sanitary pads, many organisations and government ministries provide free sanitary towels to girls in schools. Furthermore, at this stage, girls are susceptible not only to sexual harassment but also to sexual advances by men, peers, and teachers, which may force them to shy away from school.

Many researchers have observed that favouring boys' enrolment over girls is influenced by traditional socialisation patterns of adhering to the customs and the beliefs that children are family assets (Stromquist, 2007:7). This is further exacerbated by the patriarchal nature of African families which tends to place women at a disadvantage, specifically the girl child in education and school enrolment. Traditional socialisation according to customs is still prevalent in African countries, and the differences that still exist between girls and boys are a result of gender socialisation practices within families, which are embedded in the fabric of society (Degdey, 2012:4). Therefore, it is unsurprising that many African families prefer to send their sons rather than their daughters to school. This may impact negatively on girls' school attendance.

Families' socialisation of their children according to traditional customs and their inclination to send boys rather than girls to school is influenced by many factors. Negative parental attitudes towards the education of girls' stem from the fact that it is important for families to maintain traditional practices and the traditional role of girls within their society (Plan International, 2012:5). This is because people see little or no value in educating a girl, and neither do they see their children's future being different from their own (UNICEF, 2008:40). While many African governments have defined education as a universal right and urge parents to send both girls and boys to school, the choice to send children to school remains the prerogative of individual families. Given this choice, many families prefer to send their sons rather than their daughters to school.

The high increase in girls' enrolment, particularly at primary level, can be attributed to many factors, such as the commitment of individual member states to fulfil the SADC Gender Equality Protocol on Gender and Development Goals Article 14, in accordance with the MDGs 2015. This has led to the educational policies and programmes being crafted by individual

member states. Furthermore, changes in attitudes by some parents in acknowledging the value of education have contributed to closing the gender enrolment gaps in education.

Finally, based on the gender enrolment gaps at primary school level, it is apparent that the MDGs have at least been partially achieved by moving towards gender equity in primary school enrolment. However, it is noted that education equality at secondary school remains a challenge in most SADC countries.

## **2.4 SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES AND GENDER**

While Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe have made great strides in reducing gendered stereotypes in the education sector, as evidenced by high enrolment rates for both girls and boys, some challenges persist in these countries. The socioeconomic and political challenges are the major obstacles to achieving gender equality and equity in these countries (Zahidi & Ibarra, 2010:13). The socioeconomic and political problems continue to create gendered gaps in people's lives, especially in education, as parents are sometimes forced to make choices about whether their sons or daughters should attend school. In order to escape from a vicious life of poverty and for parents to be able to send their children to better schools, many families decide to leave their countries of origin to seek a better life or settle in neighbouring South Africa (UNESCO, 2005:34). Parents who leave their countries of origin to settle in other countries usually move with their children. It is estimated that close to 65 million children are presently on the move throughout the world, and this number includes both accompanied and unaccompanied children travelling without their parents to seek better opportunities (UNICEF, 2016:5). According to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2017:17), in most cases, migration involves uprooting children from settled lives, which can be hugely disruptive, stressful, and even dangerous. As the number of migrant children arriving in South Africa continues to rise, it is vital to identify their gender composition to understand their experiences in a host country.

The search for a better life is never gender-neutral, as has been the case historically. It involves both men and women, and boys and girls who migrate for different reasons. The reasons why people leave their homes in search of better lives will be discussed later in this chapter. The social context of migration is heavily dependent on gender and family interactions, which impact on and influence migration behaviours (Halpern-Manners, 2011:73). In today's world, migration is no longer a man's prerogative; men and women and boys and girls are often on the move in search of better economic opportunities. According to Fall (2007:133), today's

female migrants are recognised not only as dependants or part of the family reunification process, or as forced migrants in displacement situations, but also as independent agents and family supporters or strategists. As such, people who migrate to South Africa are a combination of women, men, girls, and boys. However, research has found that despite an increase in female migration, more men than women cross the borders (Mbiyozo, 2018:124). The gendered ratio of migrants who come to South Africa are mostly from SADC countries (65%), mainly Zimbabweans (30%), Mozambicans (14%), while migration from the DRC and Lesotho amount to 5% each (Perberdy, 2016:8). Some immigrants come from Nigeria (7%) with Pakistan and India contributing 5% and 4% respectively (Crush, 2016:17).

The migration of girls and boys without parents is also a common phenomenon these days, and it is also gendered. According to UNICEF (2009:23), most unaccompanied children (76%) interviewed at the South African Musina and the Komatipoort border posts were boys, while girls made up 24% (UNICEF, 2009:23). Some of these children find themselves in South African schools either through the help of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or when they re-unite with their families.

## 2.5 THE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANT CHILDREN IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

The information in Table 2.3 emanates from the 2001 census, because no information is available that gives a clear picture of exactly how many immigrant children are enrolled in South African schools.

Table 2.3: Percentage of children attending South African schools in 2001

Country of birth Parent/Guardian	0-6 years	7-16 years	17 years	All ages	Total
Born in South Africa, same province 1996	27	93	82	68	16,337,453
Born in South Africa, different provinces 1996	25	91	73	61	463,801
SADC country	15	84	60	50	212,163
Mozambique	12	82	53	46	130,032
Zimbabwe	12	80	32	43	142,002
Lesotho	19	90	76	57	26,603
Namibia	19	92	84	65	5,321
Swaziland	18	90	80	59	13,147
Malawi	23	87	59	56	9,639

Source: (Stats SA, 2001)

As with the data on the total number of immigrants in South Africa, the information is speculative. However, judging by unconfirmed reports, thousands of immigrant children attend schools in South Africa, either as legal or illegal immigrants. Most of the immigrant children who are in South African schools come from the SADC countries, specifically the neighbouring countries of Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. Table 2.4 presents the estimated number of school children in South African schools.

Table 2.4: Percentage of children attending school by gender

Country of birth/head of household/spouse	Male %	Female %	7-16-year-old children	Total
Born in South Africa, same province 1996	93	93	93	9,496,443
Born in South Africa, different province 1996	91	91	91	230,793
Mozambique	85	84	84	84,771
Zimbabwe	82	78	80	5,381
Lesotho	89	90	90	13,269
Namibia	93	91	92	3,083
Swaziland	90	91	91	6,964
Malawi	89	84	87	4,842

Source: (Stats SA, 2001)

There is no information for Botswana students in SA schools in the tables below, which suggests that the number could be negligible. This is understandable because Botswana arguably has the lowest percentage of migrants to SA, due to its strong economy and education system.

### 2.5.1 Immigrant Children in South African Schools

The Forced Migration Studies Programme (2007: 7) set the number of unaccompanied children who attend school in South Africa at 30% for boys and 48% for girls, as reflected in Table 2.3. The low number in male enrolment may be attributed to the fact that many migrant boys have to find work to support their families.

### 2.5.2 Immigrant Children enrolled in South African Schools by Gender

Gender, reflected in Table 2.4, is the most distinct life aspect that influences migrant children's gendered experiences, more so than any other factor, including their country of origin, age, class, race, and culture.

## **2.6 IMMIGRANT CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Among the selected SADC countries for this study, South Africa has the highest enrolment rate for both girls and boys. Table 2.1 shows that the rate of enrolment for girls was 99% in 2013 compared to 98% for boys at primary school level, while there were 54% girls enrolled in secondary school compared to 46% boys. While the rate of enrolment for both genders has decreased, in comparison to its neighbouring countries, South Africa has a higher percentage rate of enrolment across all levels of education. South Africa is the only country that provides free primary and secondary education. The high rate of enrolment rate for both girls and boys and the provision of free education up to secondary level has implications for migrant children who arrive in South Africa. South Africa's legislation is tailor-made to accommodate foreign children who seek to study in the country, since it has signed international treaties that mandate it to provide education for immigrant children. In terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa No. 108, 1996, Section 27, (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1996), all children have the right to education, irrespective of their country of origin. This is in line with Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) as well as Article 11 of the African Convention on the Rights of the Child (ACRC) (1990).

The South Africa School Act (SASA) (No. 84 of 1998) (RSA, 1998) specifies that all children between the ages of 7 and 15 years are compelled to attend school. SASA is supported by the Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools published in 1998, which stipulates the conditions of admission of foreign learners to South African public schools. It states that SASA must apply equally to pupils who are not South African and whose parents are in possession of valid temporary or permanent resident permits. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their children attend school, and to ensure that they are duly registered. As a result of these international treaties and conventions, including domestic laws, many children, both boys and girls who arrive in South Africa are registered in schools, and are able to access free learning material and free education up to secondary level.

## **2.7 THE REASONS FOR CHILDREN MIGRATING TO SOUTH AFRICA**

There is a long established history of international migration to South Africa, which has been happening for centuries, dating as far back as 1652 (Wagner, 2010:37) posits that immigration to South Africa is closely related to white colonial settlement and the consequent establishment of colonial rule, when hundreds of thousands of Europeans permanently migrated to the country. Locally situated immigrants were drawn from countries such as Mozambique,

Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, and Zimbabwe, firstly to work on the sugarcane plantations in Natal, which also saw many workers coming from countries such as India (Crush et al., 2012, 78). Thereafter, the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley and gold in the Witwatersrand in the late 1800s also triggered a marked increase in foreign migration to South Africa (Crush & Tawodzera, 2011:2). Therefore, it is evident that foreigners started arriving in South Africa centuries ago to work in the mines, which shows that their migration was driven by economic factors.

Since 1994, there has been a significant movement of people from across Africa and other continents to South Africa, reflecting the changing trends in migration. When apartheid ended, the ANC government repealed some previous migration laws as most of those passed regulated movement and denied foreigners access into South Africa (Crush, Williams & Peberdy, 2005:15). The ANC government presented new opportunities for rural-urban drift and cross-border movement, and dangled carrots to attract skilled labour (McDonald, 2000:1). After the end of apartheid, South Africa joined regional and international bodies, thus exacerbating the arrival of people who came to the country legally and illegally to seek out new opportunities. The connection with international bodies also meant that South Africa attracted people from beyond Africa who came for similar work-related opportunities. Several people, including children, found their way across the border to South Africa seeking a better life.

Both migrant families and children give similar reasons as to why they migrate to South Africa, although children have some additional reasons. Table 2.5 illustrates some of the reasons given by immigrant children.

Table 2.5: Immigrant children's reasons for migrating to South Africa

Reason	%
Lack of money or food	64
Death of parents or dying parent to care for	42
Did not attend school at home	25
Was engaged in war in home country	14
Was forced to migrate by an adult or care giver	10
Family strife such as abuse or domestic violence	6
Better schools in South Africa	3
Have a child of their own to care for	1
Health care	1
Witchcraft	1
Other	1

Source: (Forced Migration Studies Programme, 2007: 7)

### 2.7.1 Unaccompanied Immigrant Children's Reasons for Migrating to South Africa

As reflected in Table 2.5, an analysis of migration of unaccompanied minors in 2007 revealed that a lack of money or food (64%) was by far the main push factor for migrating to South Africa. In the same vein, a substantial percentage of children (42%) left their homes because of the death of one or more parents followed by those whose parents had died or were terminally ill 42%. A high percentage of children (25%) reported that they had not attended school in their home countries; 14% of these children indicated that they had escaped from wars in their home countries, while 10% indicated that they were forced out of their homes due to abuse from adults or caregivers; 6% of children indicated that they left their homes because of family strife and/or domestic violence; 3% of children said they came to South Africa because of the pull factor of being able to access better schools; while 1% of children left their home countries for other reasons.

The reasons listed in Table 2.6 could be classified as the push and pull factors and are discussed later in the study. Pull factors include conditions such as availability of better job opportunities, religious freedoms, political freedom and safety and educational opportunities. Push factors include situations such as political unrest, poverty, hunger, and death of a parent/s. Sixty-four percent of children reported that they left their homes because of lack of money or food. In this instance, HIV/AIDs could be the main contributing factor as it leaves children vulnerable to poverty.

Table 2.6: Push and pull factors

Push Factors	Pull Factors
<u>Economic</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ High unemployment</li> <li>✓ High taxes</li> <li>✓ Poor health care</li> <li>✓ Over population</li> </ul> <u>Political and Social</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Discrimination</li> <li>✓ War or oppression</li> <li>✓ Corruption</li> <li>✓ Crime</li> <li>✓ Compulsory military service</li> </ul> <u>Other</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Natural disasters</li> <li>✓ Famine</li> <li>✓ Climate change</li> </ul>	<u>Economic</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Demand for labour</li> <li>✓ High wages</li> <li>✓ Strong economic growth</li> <li>✓ Opportunities for advancement</li> <li>✓ Schooling</li> <li>✓ Technology</li> <li>✓ Generous welfare benefits</li> <li>✓ Low cost of living</li> </ul> <u>Political and Social</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Family and friends</li> <li>✓ Rights and freedoms</li> <li>✓ Law and order</li> <li>✓ Safety</li> </ul> <u>Other</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Amenities</li> </ul>

Source: (Bansak, Simpson & Zavodny, 2015:5)



Other factors that could have caused families and unaccompanied children to leave their countries of origin are discussed in the following sub-sections.

### **2.7.2 Reasons for Migration involving Family Members and their Children**

In the past, economic reasons were cited as the primary pull factors that attracted mine workers to migrate to South Africa. However, over time, other non-economic factors have emerged, which also contribute to the exodus of foreign migrants to South Africa. Based on an economic analysis of the continuous stream of migrants to South Africa, Kemp (2019:417) concludes that “the elasticity of migrant labour from other countries to South Africa may be effectively infinite or at the very least, that the potential labour supply is ‘enormous and elastic’”. As mentioned above, the push and pull dynamics can help us understand the reasons why certain people tend to leave their countries of origin for other countries. Dinbabo and Nyasulu (2015:30) argue that migration is motivated by the disadvantages and difficulties experienced in the countries of origin (push factors), and attractions and benefits in the countries of destination (pull factors). They expound that even though migrants are influenced by the push and pull factors, the actual decisions to migrate are determined by dominant impediments and individual aspects, such as the migration laws, the distance, cost, and the family (Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015:30).

The family takes centre stage when an individual decides to migrate, since they help to analyse, discuss, and evaluate the prevailing socioeconomic and political conditions of the country of origin and the destination country. Migrating can be a daunting decision sometimes, since it involves one’s life and those of the loved ones, and therefore, to leave one’s family would require reaching a consensus as a family or an extended family. For example, from an African perspective, the individual’s close kin household or extended family takes a rational decision based on careful evaluation of payoffs and costs before an individual migrates (Epstein, 2002:24). Research carried out by Paolletti (2011:270) in Italy and Libya found that for many migrants, the decision to migrate was determined by the push and pull factors, and the economic and political situation prevailing in their countries of origin. Invariably, economic and political conditions have been the major factors that motivated people to migrate to South Africa in the pre- and post-apartheid era (Adepoju, 2006:27; Aregbesola, 2010:62; Kok, Gelderblom, Ouch & van Zyl, 2006:34; Ngwenya, 2010:94). By implication, there are many types of push and pull factors that influence an individual’s decision to migrate to South Africa.

Gheasil and Nijkamp (2015:3) assert that people make decisions to migrate based on numerous types of push and pull factors, which sometimes overlap. The push and pull factors may fall

under environmental factors, that is, natural disasters, floods, and so on, and cultural factors such as religious persecution, human rights violations, and lack of educational opportunities. In general, migrants consider South Africa to be a very attractive destination country. Most of the above pull factors are relevant to the foreigners living in African and overseas countries. Despite all the odds, individuals are keen to migrate to South Africa either as documented or undocumented migrants.

#### 2.7.2.1 A better life

Globalisation has profoundly influenced the movement of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled people, aside from the basic physiological needs of human beings that need to be met. For the most part, harsh economic conditions are the main push factors that drive human beings to migrate to survive. The purpose of life is happiness, and therefore, people migrate to improve their lives, despite all the risks involved. After a careful analysis of the reasons that cause people to migrate, Hall (2005:939) concludes that they move to obtain a better life. The prospects of an improved lifestyle and better living standards are vital for an individual or a group of individuals to make a judgement on whether to migrate. The ability to migrate is also an important element which introduces the threshold effect on the decision to stay or to migrate (De Sherbinin, VanWay, McSweeney, Aggarwal, Barnieri & Henry, 2008:240). Migrants weigh up their options in terms of the gains and losses of either moving or staying put. If they decide to migrate, this may imply that there are more gains to be made than the losses they could experience if they stay. The quest for a better life is influenced by factors such as income and wages, non-scientific options, economic conditions, the community of people, and the cumulative effects.

#### 2.7.2.2 Income and wages

After comparing their own country's socioeconomic conditions and the prospects for employment and better living standards in a new country, many people are motivated to migrate to neighbouring South Africa. If individuals believe that the salary meets their expectations, is in line with their qualifications, or the types of jobs they perform, and that their skills and qualifications are held in high esteem in South Africa or Botswana, then they would move to find work in these countries. Chapell and Glennie (2010:24) found that wage differentials were the biggest driver of migration to places where skills were easily transferable between different countries, and this could also apply equally to unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Those who

have skills on offer in a global work environment use them to their advantage to gain access to work environments through the process of migration (Waller, 2006:3).

Other factors considered to be better in the destination country were “salaries, cost of living, ability to find work, prospects for professional advancement, and better educational opportunities for children, medical services, upkeep of public amenities, availability of quality affordable products and customer services” (Brink, 2012:25). Highly skilled professionals perceive that their contribution is worthy of recognition within a given economic system and by society, and therefore, where they feel this is not happening, they seek greener pastures in neighbouring countries. This is confirmed by a study carried out by Brown University between 2001-2002, which found that more than one third of all international skilled migrants came to South Africa not only to find “suitable” employment opportunities, but also to increase their income (Wentzel, Viljoen & Kok, 2006:171).

#### 2.7.2.3 Non-scientific opinions

Where a country's economy is crumbling and people have lost confidence in the government and its ability to provide valuable information to the people, they tend to rely on hearsay or non-scientific sentiments or views. A study conducted in Jordan shows that lack of information among poor people exacerbates conditions that motivate them to give credence to hearsay in making decisions about their future (Adam, 2009:9). Richards (2000:4) found that “hearsay” is responsible for the loss of skills, political instability, and uncertainty, heightened racial conflict, poor economic performance, heavy devaluation of the local currency, and an increase in crime and violence. As a result, many people move out of their country of origin to countries where they feel secure. Uncertainty and a lack of confidence in the economy and governance of a country has driven hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans to neighbouring countries, mostly to South Africa and Botswana, and as far as Western Europe and North America, among others. Matters and Richmond (2001:11) found that some of the major factors that lead to migration of skilled workers' area lack of safety and security, poor economic conditions, and poor social services. In spite of being a preferred destination for migrants from other countries, South Africa is prone to poor service delivery, a lack of safety and security and a high crime rate, and as a result, many skilled workers have migrated to overseas countries.

Already in 2007, the IOM (2007:1) reported that South Africa was losing 20,000 skilled labourers a year. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2010:17) describes this as the “greatest obstacle” for development in Africa. From the South African perspective,

Waller (2006:6) believes that the emigration of skilled people makes the country less able to attract skilled labourers and development projects. As far back as 2002, Bhorat, Meyer and Mlatsheni (2002:23) noted that South Africa had lost close to 4,600 skilled workers yearly since the end of apartheid. This was confirmed by Stats SA (2017:28) which states that, after 1994, approximately 1 million skilled South Africans who had top professional and managerial positions had left the country. Stats SA (2017:28) estimates that currently around 11,068 skilled workers leave South Africa annually for other countries. Waller (2006:6) notes that the reasons that push emigrants to leave South Africa include uncertainty about the future of the economy, job security, safety and security, and the fear that the socioeconomic conditions will decline further due to the impact of HIV/AIDS. Notably, most professionals who left South Africa were white, which may signal a racial attitude linked to lack of confidence in the first black government (Breytenbach, 2016:17). The other reason could be a perceived lack of opportunities in post-apartheid South Africa due to the policies that seek to redress inequalities such as employment equity and Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE), which favour black professionals. While some white professionals left the country due to the perceived negative future of the South African economy, people from Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Swaziland regard South Africa as a favourable destination (Waller, 2006:6) where new opportunities have been opened up by the sudden departure of whites, and thus migrants have moved in to fill the gaps.

#### 2.7.2.4 Economic conditions

The history of labour migration to South Africa during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century is linked to the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley and gold in the Witwatersrand (Crush, 2005:199). The discovery of these precious minerals was precipitated by an economic boom and modernisation at that time. Advanced technology and industrialisation attracted thousands of people who flocked to South Africa to search for new opportunities. The UNDP (2013:15) notes that people were pulled to South Africa because of the deplorable economic conditions in their home countries, as they had sunk to levels below their tolerance threshold. A classic example is that of Zimbabwe, where the collapse of the economy because of bad governance has become unbearable for citizens and forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee to neighbouring countries, mostly Botswana and South Africa, as economic refugees. As the FMSP (2007:1) pointed out, the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe led to a high migration rate of both documented and undocumented immigrants into South Africa. According to Miller, Holmes, Feulner, Kim, Riley and Roberts (2012:4), political instability and volatility in

Zimbabwe, and the lingering impact of years of hyperinflation impeded the country's economic potential, leading to massive outflows of Zimbabweans to South Africa in search of better jobs and improved wages. Crush and Frayne (2007:30) state that the main reasons for migrating to South Africa are the 'pull factors' such as search for freedom, safety, and new opportunities, as well as the 'push factors' such as political instability, disruption of the economy, fear, prosecution, and natural disasters. Already in 2000, Adepoju (2000:14) observed that socioeconomic insecurity, abject poverty, and extreme unemployment in some countries have triggered a wave of documented and undocumented migrants to South Africa at a rate never witnessed before.

Furthermore, a study of the causes of cross-border migration by Zimbabweans and Mozambicans into South Africa established that macro-economic variables were the main causes of migration (Truen & Chisadza, 2012:3). In analysing the study, these researchers found that immigrants from Lesotho, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique were motivated to migrate because South Africa offered them better employment opportunities, higher wages (even for non-skilled labour), a lower average price of goods, and a more stable currency value, relative to their home countries. This finding is similar to a research study conducted in Burkina Faso by Van den Berg, Manias and Burger (2008:114), which found that employment opportunities and the possibility of receiving a greater income lured the country's poor households into migrating to other countries.

South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), is higher than a combination of all the SADC countries (Stats SA, 2011:2). Channing and Simon (2018:297) note that South Africa holds more than half of the SADC countries' GDP, and this means that people who live in South Africa's neighbouring countries that have smaller and weaker economies, are either pulled or pushed to migrate to other countries in large numbers (World Bank, 2016:51). It is further noted that South Africa has a high GDP, which is 10 times larger than all SADC countries combined, and high-income levels of up to \$500, which are incentives for many people to migrate to South Africa (International Labour Office [ILO], 1999:22; Ngomane, 2010:15). In this sense, the South African economy is portrayed as being able to sustain its own people and immigrants from other countries. However, the Labour Force Survey statistics in the second quarter of 2019 revealed that about 29% of people were without jobs (Stats SA, 2019:3) compared to 27,6% in the previous period. It was the highest rate of joblessness since the first quarter of 2003 (Stats SA, 2019:3).

#### 2.7.2.5 Community of people and the snowballing

Having briefly followed the history of mine labour and the subsequent increase in migration flow to South Africa after 1994, it is possible that factors that influence migration are not only economic, but they are also social and cultural. The peoples of Africa and Southern Africa have historical and cultural ties that predate colonial times. The existence of people who speak the same language and share the same culture, history, and ethnicity on both sides of South Africa and Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Mozambique respectively means that immigrants can adapt and easily become absorbed into the South African communities, and this motivates migration to the country. According to Crush, Williams and Peberdy (2005:116), most African countries share extensive commonalities along the borders, sometimes cutting through four to five countries. For instance, in East and Central Africa, in Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Tigrinya language is found in the same regions due to strong ethnic, cultural, and religious ties of peoples along the borders. Likewise, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda have large ethnic groups that speak the same language and share historical ties (ILO, 2012:17). This makes it easy for people of these countries to visit or migrate to any of them, since they easily identify with each other.

Within South Africa, the history of mine labourers shows that migrants from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Botswana started arriving in South Africa in the late 1800s (Crush et al., 2005:116). Many of the people who arrived a century ago have established themselves and more relatives have joined them. This is a motivation for migration, as some of these people have relatives or have married on the other side of the borders. This arrangement promotes the mushrooming of networks within communities on both sides of the border which may act as incentives for people to migrate to South Africa.

This can be explained by the network theory, which postulates that migrant stocks in receiving countries form networks over time, which may aid and encourage potential migrants (Esveldt, Kulu-Glasgow, Schoorl & van Solenge, 1995:431). Immigration has been institutionalised in South Africa considering that it started over a century ago with the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley and gold in the Witwatersrand, and today, as migration increases, it has become institutionalised. This institutionalisation manifests in profit and non-profit organisations operating to serve different needs of immigrant communities, as well as other potential migrants.

Koket al. (2006:242) define migrant networks as a set of interpersonal ties that connect migrants to former migrants in origin and destination areas, through ties of kinship, friendship, and a shared community of origin. These strong networks contribute to large numbers of people immigrating into South Africa, particularly since some of them have been resident in the country for a very long time. According to Kok et al. (2006:242), networks stimulate, facilitate, discourage, and channel migration. It is not surprising to find certain migrants from one country or province dominant in a specific community. For example, Zimbabweans from the Matabeleland region and Nigerians are the dominant migrants found in the central business district (CBD) of Johannesburg. The reason why they are clustered in one place may be a result of strong kinship bonds and continuous contacts with their fellow citizens, which have been maintained over the years, making it easy for other relatives to migrate and join them in South Africa.

Relatives who have long been established in South Africa help collect and disseminate valuable information needed to migrate. This involves vital information, such as the cost of the journey from the country of origin to the country of destination, the availability of job opportunities, assurance of accommodation, requirements to enter the country of destination, and even going as far as providing resources such as money for relatives to acquire travel documents. In some extreme cases, these networks assist in smuggling relatives by paying exorbitant fares to smugglers and helping migrants to assimilate into the destination country once they have arrived. Thus, the existence of a community of people who migrants can identify with and easily fit in with is an incentive for people to migrate to South Africa, and it will require extensive research to determine its relevance and contribution to migration.

Networks also function as outposts for professionals who want to migrate to the destination country by providing particular important information about occupations and companies that require specific skills. McDonald and Danso (2001:155) and Solomon (2003:27) are of the collective view that shared history, culture, and kinship ties are responsible for tying people across borders. This is because they have maintained connections for a long time and have preserved socioeconomic, cultural, political, and ethnic ties, which have improved due to modern communication methods. According to Kok et al. (1996:21), the Forced Migrant Rights Monitoring Programme (FMSP, 2007:4), and the Musina Legal Advice Office (MLAO) (2007:6), communication and technology strengthen the impulse to migrate because people have information and knowledge about whether or not to migrate. Most immigrants who come from countries such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Botswana, and Zimbabwe have

contact with relatives in South Africa (McDonald, 2000:165). Kloppers (2006:162) studied people on both sides of the border of southern Mozambique and South Africa and found that social networks played a crucial role in motivating people of Mozambique to migrate to South Africa, particularly illegal immigrants.

Illegal immigrants are facilitated by the South African borders, which are seen as “porous”, and make it very difficult for South Africa to maintain safety and security measures since it borders Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Namibia and has a long coastline. Illegal immigrants use the porous borders to sneak into South Africa unnoticed, using designated routes that have been established over a long period. Border policing has failed to provide an effective deterrence to illegal migration (Tati, 2008:423). Lack of insufficient staff, corruption and bribery in the Department of Home Affairs are factors perpetuating illegal migration into the country (Human Rights Watch, 2006:4; Kok et al., 2006:67; Landau, 2007:61).

Migration is a complex phenomenon that cannot be influenced by one factor to motivate people to leave their countries of origin to settle in destination countries. People are motivated to migrate by different factors and circumstances that they experience at a time and in a space. People have different reasons for migrating, and they go beyond the push and pull factors that view the migrant as a rational individual motivated by environmental, economic, and demographic factors (De Haas, 2010:1587).

## **2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed gender theoretical frameworks that explain how gendered behaviours and experiences are acquired. The SLT argues that the social environment plays an important part in facilitating the acquisition of gender-appropriate behaviour. Children learn through observable behaviours and role modelling. The aim of the chapter was to identify those factors that influence gendered experiences prior to migration. It was established that gender socialisation plays an important role in determining and ensuring that children acquire gendered behaviours, beliefs and expectations based on whether they are girls or boys. The family was identified as an important institution that socialises children according to their gender. Within the family, children are taught how to behave according to the allocation of their gender roles. The schools also complement the family by entrenching gender role socialisation. At school, children are influenced by teachers and peers to acquire gender behaviour that is appropriate according to their gender. The chapter also discussed the SADC



protocol on gender and development, specifically Article 14, whose aim is to promote gender parity in school enrolment. Lastly, the chapter identified the reasons why parents and their children leave their countries of origin.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **GENDER DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE AND IMMIGRANT CHILDREN'S GENDERED EXPERIENCES IN SCHOOLS**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 2, gender schema theory (cf. 2.2.1) underpinning gender development and the research literature on gender socialisation with specific reference to how the family, peers, schools, and the social environment influence gender development experiences in young people was explored. The chapter also examined gender enrolment patterns in selected SADC countries. Lastly, the chapter presented a contextual background analysis of reasons for migration to South Africa. This chapter deals reviews international and scholarly literature on gendered experiences of immigrant children in host countries. Researchers have found that the family, peers, school, and social environment exert strong influences on gender development experiences. How children learn gender roles and responsibilities can be explained by gender development theories.

#### **3.2 THE GENDERED EXPERIENCES OF IMMIGRANT CHILDREN**

There is agreement in international literature that children are exposed to gender socialisation while at home and school prior to migration (Feliciano & Rumbaut 2005:1087). While children are still in their countries of origin, male education is often preferred over girl education. The United Kingdom AID (UKAID) (2015:4) found that in Africa, gender discrimination and inequality were deeply rooted in communities, due to cultural practices and poverty. As a result, gender equality in education remains a distant goal. The research found that out of 54 countries surveyed, 16 countries in Sub-Sahara Africa had no equal educational opportunities for all.

Johnson and Kyle (2001:365) found that 22% of all students in Africa dropped out of school, and the women's dropout rate of 20% was two percentage points higher than the dropout rate of 18% for boys. While many factors influence a high dropout rate, they hypothesised that the preference for boys' education over girls' education was a major factor.

Qin and Lykes's (2006:117) Chinese study also established that the cultural trends favoured boys over girls, and that this was common in rural areas and resulted in a decrease in the number of girls enrolled from middle school to high school. The reason given for the decrease in the enrolment of girls was that parents did not anticipate any economic returns if girls were

educated. As a result, women were likely to be withdrawn or denied access to formal education in favour of boys (Feliciano, 2012:435).

### **3.2.1 Parental Gender Role Shift after Migration**

According to López (2003:8), there is a shift in gender role socialisation once parents move from their home countries to a new country. When parents are in the host country, they are more likely to give equal access to education for both boys and girls. It has been pointed out that while in their home countries, parents do not give girls equal access to education because they do not anticipate any economic returns. However, when they are in their adopted country, the fear of not giving equal education to girls is dispelled for various reasons. Suárez-Orozco and Qin (2006:165) assert that the American society values gender equality and advocate that women should have the same equal education opportunities as men to move up the ladder. This dispels the immigrant parents' fears of investing in girls' education, as they realise that girls can also provide them with security when they are old.

In their home countries, some parents must work hard to send their children to school. However, in their host countries, they realise that education is provided affordably or freely, and this allows them to send both girls and boys to school (Feliciano, 2006:165). In some host countries, there are also support programmes that provide free breakfast and lunch to low-income families (López, 2003:8). Such social protection programmes make it affordable for parents to send both their male and female children to school.

In most cases, when immigrant parents arrive in their host countries, they still hold traditional views about education and may not consider giving girls access to education. However, over time, attitudes begin to change. For example, Crul and Doornik (2003:80) observed that in the past, the Turkish community in the Netherlands did not set much store by their daughters doing well in school. This denial attitude amongst the Turkish community faded to a more positive and open stance over time (Crul & Doornik, 2003:1039). Girls who exhibit high performance at school may have contributed to influencing a change of attitude towards girls' education.

According to Zhou and Bankston (2001:12), this shift in gender socialisation does not imply that immigrant parents have abandoned their traditional gender role socialisation, but rather that they accommodate new challenges that address education imbalances in host countries.

Traditional gender role socialisation is more visible and expressed in sociocultural factors between girls and boys in everyday life.

The following section discusses the sociocultural and other characteristics of the school environment that are collectively considered to play a major role in promoting gender role socialisation at home and at school. The home and school are considered to play significant roles in gender role socialisation, where beliefs about gender and gender-type behaviours are encouraged, which lead to gendered experiences.

### **3.3 THE SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCING GENDER EXPERIENCES**

The sociocultural factors are the social and cultural differences between girls and boys that are a result of their gender socialisation at home and school. The family plays a significant role in solidifying sociocultural factors by ensuring that girls and boys are exposed to different roles and responsibilities. Sociocultural factors influence how people think, feel, and behave in society. These factors include patterns of behaviours, attitudes, personality traits and experiences, based on whether one is male or female. Cultural factors include educational aspirations, community attitudes, and parental expectations.

The sociocultural theory postulates that human beings cannot be separated from their social and historical context, so it becomes vital to evaluate society and the development taking place within a given time and space (Oguz, 2007:3). It is for this reason that the following section discusses some of the sociocultural factors that affect boys and girls as they are socialised in their communities.

#### **3.3.1 Domestic Chores after Migration**

Immigrant families face several challenges regarding gender role distribution once they have immigrated. This is particularly so since both parents may be required to work, and therefore, children may be allocated more household responsibilities. In such a scenario, parents may revert to traditional gender role allocation where girls are required to perform household chores.

Historically and traditionally, girls were kept in the home and raised to be nurturing, responsible, and obedient, while boys activities were centred outside the home, where they learned to achieve and be self-reliant, becoming the breadwinners of the family (Talbani & Hasanali, 2000:618). As part of their household chores, immigrant girls tend to have many

more responsibilities in the home than immigrant boys. Kamil, Pearsen, Mojeand Afflerbach (2011:519), for example, found that girls, more often than boys, were allocated to tasks that required “greater responsibility”. At home, immigrant girls are often allocated roles such as translating, financial management duties, and acting in loco parentis.

Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hillard’s study in America established that though girls and boys do not report different levels of responsibilities for translating, girls are significantly more likely to report responsibilities for cooking and childcare. Marks, Bun and McHale, (2009:221) also found that parents' division of housework, measured when children were about one year of age, predicted children's later participation in domestic tasks in their lives. The various roles and responsibilities assigned to girls have a great influence on their futures, particularly at school where they are transformed into organisational and managerial duties. Girls have been found to be more organised at school than boys (Science Daily, 2017:1). Additional domestic duties and responsibilities for girls could lead to women spending more time at home and investing more in their education (Varner & Mandara, 2013:147).

While some researchers opine that domestic responsibilities put a lot of pressure on girls and that this impacts on their education (Lewis, 2009:4), Ginorio and Huston (2001:260) and Fuligni and Pederson (2002:560) collectively argue that household responsibilities do not impact negatively on girls’ education per se; instead they posit that the sense of responsibility developed in the home may transfer to the school setting. In a study conducted in America, Jurkevic (2004:4) found that while “filial responsibilities” sometimes compete with schooling pursuits, performing caretaking tasks also provides girls with “an increased sense of personal and interpersonal competence”. Hence, these roles and responsibilities performed by girls at home surprisingly bring unexpected benefits at school. For example, McLaughlin (2012:36) conducted research in America, which showed that higher achieving Latina girls tend to have more domestic responsibilities than low achievers. This may suggest that the social skills that girls acquire in the home, contribute to schooling and education.

Similarly, a study of immigrant children in the United States conducted by Crul and Doornik (2003:1039) established that the home environment motivates girls to perform well at school to free themselves from gender inequalities. The studies applied the dual home reference theory aimed at immigrant girls (Lee, 2007:403; López, 2003:8), which posits that immigrant girls are aware that their own opportunities are better than those offered in their countries of origin, and

that education will help them to achieve a gender equality greater than what their own mothers experienced (López, 2003:8).

### **3.3.2 Parental Expectations after Migration**

Gender role socialisation is also evident in parental expectations after migration. Immigrant parents who come from countries that have less educational and professional development opportunities want their girl children to benefit from available educational opportunities in the new country. These parents compare the disadvantaged situation back home in their countries of origin to the better opportunities for their children in the host country, and believe that being educated and having a career is the road to success (Braeye & Hermans, 2011:56). As such, they have high expectations for their children, and later tend to motivate their children to excel in school. Marschall, Shah and Donato (2012:130) posit that the advantage of immigrant parents' high educational aspirations for their children is that it boosts their learning and academic performance. Immigrant girls tend to benefit from their parents' high expectations, which are occasioned by a shift in gender socialisation, where, like boys, girls are given equal access to school. As a result of high parental expectations, girls become more diligent in their schoolwork.

Research has shown that immigrant parents have higher expectations of their daughters than they do of their sons (Kipnis, 2009:10). This is understandable considering the shift in gender role socialisation after immigration, where girls receive equal education in the host country. Qin's (2006:91) American study established that a higher percentage of girls (82%) than boys (70%) reported that their parents considered their going to college very important. The high parental expectations of girls may be linked to the traditional gender roles they perform at home, including the efforts they put into their studies at school. Immigrant parents hold education in high regard, and since girls spend most of their time with parents in the home, they have an increased advantage over boys.

Feliciano's (2012:431) American study established that more girls than boys believed their parents wanted them to continue with their education rather than work after completing high school. This could suggest that immigrant parents significantly influence their children (Gunderson et al., 2012:154). For example, Desforges and Abouchaar's (2003:38) research among Chinese immigrants in America found that one parent described her daughter's achievement of 5As and 7's as "not bad but she could do better". Despite the excellent results obtained by daughter, the mother was not satisfied with the results. These high expectations

are likely to be relayed to the girl, encouraging her to put more effort in her schoolwork. In Lareau's (2011:27) research among Bangladeshi immigrant parents in England, one Bangladeshi father explained, "Education is very important – us Pakistanis, in the majority are uneducated. These days, uneducated people have no value – if you want a job, you won't get a good one." A Pakistani mother stated: "Education is the most important thing in your life".

Desforges and Abouchaar (2003:38) describe this process as "at home relationships". The "at home relationships" and aspiration modelling may be responsible for building children's own aspirations and their future expectations. Immigrant children have higher educational aspirations and expectations and emphasise the importance of a good education (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006:27). Immigrant parents are responsible for assisting their children to build pro-social, pro-learning self-concepts and to have high educational aspirations (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003:38). In an American study by Adewumi, Olojo and Falemu (2012:11), it was established that higher levels of parental expectations and consistent encouragement and actions to enhance learning opportunities were all found to be positively associated with high aspirations and college enrolment for girls as opposed to boys. This is also congruent with the children's own expectations and ambitions. An American research study on Chinese immigrants by Coughlan (2012:4) found that 9 out of 10 Chinese immigrant children took responsibility for their education. One Chinese immigrant learner commented: "It depends on the effort I invest. I can succeed if I study hard. I am the owner of my own success".

Such high expectations may be linked to positive parental expectations. Immigrant children's positive attitudes and commitment could be a result of the 'at home relationships', which are responsible for motivating their educational achievement. This is an effective strategy used by immigrant families to ensure that their children establish successful careers in their host countries (Coughlan, 2012:4). On the other hand, despite the differences in ethnic backgrounds and social status, most parents regard education as a priority and are hopeful that their children will acquire a quality education.

Research confirms that parental expectations and aspirations positively impact their children's educational expectations as well as aspirations (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2005:1087). Jacobs (2010:13) posits that the way students identify with their parents' educational aspirations, influences their own aspirations and expectations. Immigrant scholars contend that immigrant families hold strong family values in high regard (Merz, Özeke-Kocabas, Oort & Schuengel, 2009:290). Kao and Tienda (1995:5) argued that these positive qualities, coupled with a higher

level of optimism and aspirations, function as a protective shield to override the negative effects resulting from poor adjustment in the host country. Immigrant parents transfer their own high expectations and aspirations onto their children, which they are likely to embrace and use to inspire them to work harder.

Research suggests that immigrant parents have high aspirations that are conveyed explicitly or implicitly to their children (Massey & Sanchez, 2010:11). From the above discussions, it is evident that immigrant parents and their children's aspirations are congruent on educational matters. Because of their parents' high expectations and constant motivation and supervision, many girls have higher aspirations and expectations than boys. As a result, Crul and Vermeulen (2006:45) found that girls often postpone getting married and having children by continuing their education and/or entering the labour market.

### **3.3.3 Parental Control and Monitoring after Migration**

When immigrant parents and children are in a host country, they often develop close gendered relationships, which may be used as a mechanism to subject children to monitor and control. These gendered relationships in the home may imply that immigrant parents exercise control and monitor their children more so than they would have been likely to do in their home countries. In this new scenario, parents tend to monitor and control girls more often than boys and direct girls towards education (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2005:1087; Qin, 2003:8).

Research carried out in Western countries, specifically in the United States, which has the highest number of immigrants from Latin America, shows that immigrant parents control and monitor their daughters' activities and movements in a stricter way than they do their sons (Feliciano, 2012:431; López, 2003:8). In a study of immigrant students in the United States of America, Foner (2009:27) found that a higher percentage of girls than boys reported that their parents always knew their whereabouts. Stricter parental control and monitoring was reflected across nationalities, with both boys and girls agreeing that girls did not have much freedom to socialise with their friends, to participate in outside the home activities, and to secure part-time jobs (Qin, 2004:106).

In comparison to Western parents, immigrant parents were found to be more controlling and protective, demanded obedience, and encouraged young children to stay close to and to be dependent on them (Ho, 1986:482; Sartaj & Aslam, 2010: 46). For example, Lin, Hu, Yen, Hsu, Lin, Loh and Wu's (2009:1444) study investigated 138 Taiwanese families in the US and



established that they placed more emphasis on girls' achievements and encouraged their independence. In the same vein, Bankston, and Zhou (2002:389) found that Vietnamese immigrant families set higher standards for their daughters' behaviour than their sons, and these expectations carried over into realising better behaviour and achievement for girls in school. This might suggest that the gender role shift post migration arises from the immigrant parents' desire to embrace opportunities in their new country rather than abandoning their cultural practices. In contrast, López's (2003:1160) study of Dominican immigrant families found that girls were taught that they must be financially independent when they grow up because they cannot depend on men to support them. The dissimilarity in the two examples provided, may stem from different ethnic backgrounds and spheres of influence according to the immigrants' countries of origin. It may also mean that once in new countries, immigrant families react according to the demands and needs prevalent in their new environments.

Further studies in the US by Sung (1987:171) and Olsen (1997:171) found that immigrant girls were often not allowed to attend parties, spend time with friends after school, or participate in after-school programmes and other activities that immigrant boys were allowed to do freely. Immigrant girls face restrictions regarding the way they dress, their makeup usage, and their language usage (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008:171). The restrictions on dress code may be regarded as a manifestation of cultural carry-over effects that parents bring from their home countries where girls' dressing is controlled. Control and monitoring of dressing may also be a reflection that immigrant families still value dress codes according to cultural norms and standards practised in their countries of origin.

However, research conducted by Al Ansari (2004:5) and Fernandez and Fogli (2009:148) challenge the stereotypical view that culture dictates both girls' and boys' behaviour. Their findings acknowledge that, in some cases, girls were not allowed to perform certain activities, but there was also evidence of girls exploring different styles of dressing, like wearing Western clothes and makeup, and dating boys, in defiance of their parents. Some girls demonstrated a strong sense of identity (Vogel, Wester, Heesactor, Boysen & Seeman, 2006:306). On the other hand, boys were found to have more freedom than girls, and to cooperate with their parents at the same time (Al Ansari, 2004:5). There is strong evidence that post migration, parents are more indulgent of boys and often overlook their violations of social norms, food taboos, and drinking habits (Ghuman, 2003:16). In studying Chinese immigrant families in the US, Qin (2004:106) determined that immigrant children were often aware of the different treatment they received from their parents. For example, Lilli, a 15-year-old Chinese girl had this to say:

If I were a boy, I could stay out late at night. They would not be as strict to me as they are now. They do not care too much about my elder brother. Additionally, they would not be noisy if I were a boy: they always want to know about me and my things. If I were a boy, I probably would have more freedom (Qin, 2004:106).

Some girls felt that the restrictions on some of their activities represented double standards in parental control and monitoring, as they felt that these were applied more often to them than to their male siblings. According to Portes, Fernandez-Kelly and Waller (2005:81), this could lead to greater family conflict, which could result in delinquency and could negatively compromise the girls' education. Post-immigrant families are more prone to conflict when in host countries that do not practise similar traditional gender roles to their countries of origin (Zhou & Bankston, 2001:855).

Once immigrant families have migrated, relationships within and outside families usually impact on family roles and responsibilities, and affect how families are run and managed, which is often different to the way relationships were managed in the countries of origin. Post immigration requires families to walk a "delicate tight rope" (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2015:8), and to adopt new patterns of interaction and coping that may conflict with well-established patterns (García-Coll & Magnuson, 2005:25).

The treatment of girls in host countries may be inappropriate considering the gender equity in these countries, with girls expecting to be treated in the same manner as boys are treated. As a result, clashes or differences between children and their parents are bound to flare up, sometimes with dire consequences. Research has found that girls, as opposed to boys, from immigrant families are more vulnerable to stress occasioned by adjustment and family-related stress (Suárez-Orozco & Qin, 2006:165). Research by Zambrana and Silva-Palacos (1989:12) on gender-related stress in Mexican immigrant learners found that statistically, immigrant girls had significantly higher stress levels than immigrant boys. Overall, immigrant girls tend to be stressed by poor family relationships and pressure to perform academically. Poor parental supervision is also linked to antisocial behaviours, association with delinquent peers and academic failure (Hoeve, Dubas, Eichelsheim, van der Laan, Smeenk & Gerris, 2009:750). One disadvantage of strict parental control and monitoring is that it may promote traditional gender roles that maintain the status quo, restricting the social mobility of girls. However, stricter parental control and monitoring has been found to benefit girls more than boys in

education. By spending most of their time at home, girls were likely to concentrate on school-related work, such as reading and completing homework.

### **3.4 SCHOOL FACTORS INFLUENCING GENDER EXPERIENCES**

Education, like the family and peers, influences gendered experiences in children. The following section presents school factors that influence gendered development experiences.

#### **3.4.1 Definition of ‘Educational Expectations’ and ‘Aspirations’**

It is appropriate to define the terms, ‘educational aspirations’ and ‘expectations’ since both are influenced by the gendered experiences of immigrant children. These terms are allied to the general question often posed to children: What do you want to be when you grow up? This is a very pertinent issue to children of immigrants, considering that their lives have been interrupted and that they will have to redefine their dreams in a new country.

Educational expectations are realistic in capturing concrete plans for the future (Feliciano, 2006:282) and correspond to “the educational and occupational levels that children of immigrants realistically expect to achieve” (Portes, Aparicho, Haller & Vickstrom, 2010:768). Furthermore, educational aspirations capture general goals or ambitions for the future (Feliciano, 2006:282), while, according to Portes et al. (2010:768), aspirations correspond to the level of education that respondents would ideally like to achieve. In conclusion, Brian and Wilder (2010:4) state that expectations refer to what individuals think will happen, while aspirations refer to what they hope will happen.

#### **3.4.2 Immigrant Children’s Educational Aspirations and Expectations**

The study of immigrant children’s educational aspirations and expectations is important because it enables us to predict how they contribute to their schooling and educational performance, considering that they have left their countries of origin.

Research has established that boys and girls from immigrant families have high ambitions and hopes for the future (Gutman & Akerman, 2008:13). This suggests that immigrant boys’ and girls’ dreams are gendered as they try to define themselves in their new environment. Researchers are of the view that aspirations and expectations are achievement ambitions, and are therefore psychological resources that individuals draw upon to determine further schooling (Khattab, 2014:7), while others argue that aspirations and expectations are realistic calculations of the prospects for future education (Khattab, 2015:734).

In this case, aspirations and expectations may assist in explaining why girls and boys have high ambitions, albeit in a gendered way. Reynolds and Burge (2008:485) are of the opinion that educational aspirations and expectations enable us to foretell how immigrant boys and girls will perform at school or educationally and the reason why aspirations and expectations are gendered. The gendering of aspirations and expectations appear to emanate from many social sectors. These social environments are responsible for promoting and/or hindering aspirations and expectations. Chief amongst the social institutions responsible for gender role socialisation of aspirations and expectations are the family and school.

As children all over the world have very high aspirations and expectations for the future, the big question is: Do boys' and girls' ambitions differ according to gender in the host country? This question will be dealt with once the terms 'aspirations' and 'expectations' have been defined according to relevant literature.

### **3.4.3 The Family's Role in developing Aspirations and Expectations**

The development of aspirations and expectations is credited to the family and takes place through gender role socialisation at home by way of different treatment applied to boys and girls according to their gender. As a result, boys and girls have different aspirations and expectations, as they are influenced by their family upbringing. It is within the family that aspirations and expectations are relayed to children by immigrant parents. The family plays a significant role in shaping the development of aspirations albeit in a gendered way. In immigrant parents' home countries, greater emphasis is placed on boys than girls, as families tend to invest more in men than women due to the cultural notion that boys are likely to benefit more from family economic resources (Adams & Coltrane, 2005:230). However, even though girls are educationally disadvantaged in their home countries, Schneider and Stevenson (1999:1089) found that there has been a redefinition of gender roles by immigrant families, which has resulted in a shift in educational ambitions among girls, which are now more aligned with boy's ambitions. Lindberg, Hyde and Hirsch (2008:232), and Vidal and Lersch, (2019:1111) collectively link the gender role shift to a "change in gender role ideology", which has resulted in girls closing the educational gap that previously existed in their home countries. Research has shown that immigrant parents are becoming much more involved in their daughters' education while in host countries than when they were in their countries of origin, as they now regularly discuss educational matters with their daughters (Reynolds & Burge, 2008:485). This parental support may increase the immigrant girls' educational expectations.

Since immigrant girls spend more of their time at home than immigrant boys, this could lead to the development of greater aspirations and expectations (Varner & Mandara, 2013:1443). The development of aspirations and expectations may contribute to higher standards of good behaviour at home, which could transfer into good behaviour and increased ambitions for school/education (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2005:1087). Higher aspirations and expectations for girls inspire them to pursue higher education and seek economic independence, to confront traditional gender role discrimination, and to fulfil parental expectations (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2005:1086). For boys, resisting parental expectations while in host countries may result in lowered aspirations and expectations, which may lead to poor performance at school. According to Mickelson (1989:355), higher aspirations and expectations in girls could be linked to the fact that to be “feminine is to be good in general”, while masculinity is linked to resisting authority.

#### **3.4.4 Parental Level of Education and the Development of Aspirations and Expectations**

The level of parental education has a significant influence on immigrant children’s expectations and aspirations. Research indicates that parental levels of education play an important role in developing immigrant children’s aspirations and expectations (Feliciano, 2006:80), especially girls. Parents with high levels of education are more likely to have the educational experience and resources “to draw upon when helping both their children to achieve a college or graduate level education” (Spera, Wentzel & Matto, 2009:1140). Parents may influence their children’s aspirations and expectations by participating in school-based activities. This could be by way of reassurances that they consistently give to their daughters, the educational resources they provide, the right learning environment they create at home, and the homework help they give their children (Portes & Rivas, 2011:219). When immigrant children perceive parental involvement as helpful, this is likely to develop positive engagement at school, improve their participation in school activities, and reduce absenteeism.

#### **3.4.5 The School and Social Environment’s Role in influencing Immigrant Children’s Aspirations and Expectations**

Schools also significantly promote the gendered aspirations and expectations amongst immigrant children. They influence immigrant children’s aspirations and expectations through their organisational, social, and instructional processes (Eccles, 2004:125). The educational aspirations and expectations may arise because of influence from the social structures within the school, with teachers and peer groups playing significant roles. For example, some

immigrant children within a social group may come from families that emphasise strong educational commitment and support their children's academic attainment. The immigrant children might identify with other children who have the same ambitions and strive for academic excellence. As a result, higher educational aspirations and expectations are likely to develop.

Furthermore, teachers might use appropriate management tools within the class that are combined with good instructional methods that facilitate the development of aspirations and expectations. The school and teachers could also provide more opportunities and positive rewards that are more favourable to girls than boys. Research has consistently shown that the educational aspirations and expectations of immigrant children are largely influenced by institutional arrangements (Portes et al., 2010:219). This implies that the schools that these children attend, the teaching and learning environment they are exposed to, and the friends they associate with, may have major influences on their educational aspirations and expectations for their future.

Within this context, teachers and peers are believed to be responsible for gender role socialisation, in that they manipulate the school's social context so that it is in the girls' favour. Instructors may be responsible for behaviours that girls exhibit more often than boys, such as being attentive in class and devoting more effort to schoolwork (Downey, Vogt & Yuan, 2005:299). This could be the reason why girls display higher aspirations and expectations than boys.

#### **3.4.6 Reflections on Immigrant Children's Gendered Aspirations and Expectations**

The high aspirations and expectations amongst girls are also reflected in most research studies across the world. Kao and Tienda's (1993:350) American study found that Latina girls had higher aspirations and expectations than boys when measured on reading and history. Brandon's (1991:45) study of gender differences in educational aspirations and expectations among Asian Americans found similar results. In a study that researched Dominican, Mexican, and other Central American children, Qin-Hilliard (2003:92), discovered that girls consistently reported higher educational aspirations and expectations than boys. Specifically, he noted that 76% of the girls reported post high school plans compared to 64% of boys. Data from an earlier Longitudinal and Immigrant Student Adaptation (LISA) study also showed that with time, girls received higher grades and expressed higher future expectations than boys (Qin, 2003:92). For

example, Khattab (2015:333) suggests that increasing the aspirations and expectations of immigrant learners enhances their chances of high school completion.

During interviews with immigrant children conducted in America, Feliciano and Rumbaut (2005:1086) found that, 22% of all immigrant boys expected to have a college degree and/or to be in the process of attaining a two-year degree, while in contrast, during the same interviews, 30% of immigrant girls indicated that they expected to graduate with an advanced degree. In a follow-up study, Feliciano and Rumbaut (2005:1087) established that these students' high aspirations and expectations were not met, and that about 54% of boys and 46% of girls had not obtained their degrees six years later. Similarly, Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard (2004:8) established that 92% of Vietnamese girls expected to attain a college degree, compared to only 81% of boys. In comparison, Suárez-Orozco (2002:40) conducted research among Mexican immigrant children in America and found that, only about 71% of girls had high expectations of attaining a degree compared to only 56% of boys. The above findings confirm international studies that have established that girls tend to have higher expectations and aspirations than boys, and as a result, they are more likely than boys to obtain a university qualification (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2005:1087; Portes et al., 2010:219). This may suggest that immigrant girls' high aspirations and expectations influence their educational achievement, and they are thus more likely than immigrant boys to fulfil their obligations of obtaining advanced degrees.

### **3.4.7 Gendered Aspirations and Expectations according to Origin and Birthplace**

American research points to a gap in aspirations and expectations according to origin and birthplace. Par and Mok's (1995:5) American study established that immigrant children of Asian descent had the highest aspirations, while immigrant children with a New Zealand background had the lowest aspirations. A similar study in the US by Borrione, Donato, Landini and Valetti (2006:129) found that Cuban immigrant children had significantly higher educational aspirations than children of Mexican and Puerto Rican origin.

Similarly, Loure's (2006:237) study compared children of Dominican and Chinese origin in the USA and found that their aspirations and expectations of the future depended on the reference groups against which they compared themselves. According to Loure's (2006:237) findings, Dominican migrant children felt that they were doing better than native minority children in the US as well as those children left behind at home, while Chinese child migrants compared themselves to high-performing American children.

In conclusion, aspirations and expectations represent future hope and plans, and play a vital role in shaping immigrant children's education. Aspirations and expectations are influenced by, *inter alia*, the immigrant family socioeconomic circumstances, the parents' level of education, peer relationships, gender, and the school environment. Aspirations have been found to be highly gendered, with girls having higher aspirations than boys (Loure, 2006:237). On the other hand, aspirations take on ethnic dimensions, with some immigrant children from ethnicities showing higher aspirations than others (Par & Mok, 1995:5). Different aspirations between boys and girls also contribute to how children spend time engaged in doing homework.

### **3.5 HOMEWORK**

Most countries have educational programmes that assist learners to improve their performance in school. Schools are responsible for ensuring that all children, irrespective of gender or nationality, perform well, to cover the curriculum. In such environments, homework plays a vital role in ensuring that learners improve their performance. Immigrant learners may benefit from homework programmes that are offered in schools. Homework has emerged as a potential vehicle to improve learner achievement (Cooper, Robinson & Patall, 2006:3).

In South Africa, most schools have foreign-born learners (Meier & Hartell, 2009:181). These children comprise the fastest growing segment of the school-aged population (Hernandez, Denton & McCartney, 2007:19). Immigrant learners have enormous challenges while in school as they are exposed to many subjects, some of which are taught in local languages. As a result, their performance is not satisfactory and they may perform well behind local learners (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco & Tondorova, 2008:16).

To improve their schooling performance, schools consider homework to be a useful tool for learners. Homework is designed according to the learner's level of understanding, with work tailored to giving immigrant learners a chance to catch up with the rest of the local children. Therefore, homework includes all the activities that supplement schoolwork, such as research, completing assignments, and studying at home. International research indicates that there is a symbiotic relationship between homework completion and high school completion (Cooper et al., 2006:1). It is imperative that teachers give learners work that is appropriate and that is within their cognitive understanding. Failure to give learners work that is within their level of understanding may put immigrant children in "a position of cumulative disadvantage" for failed opportunities to learn, negative teacher perceptions, lower academic self-efficacy, and disengagement over time (Goslin, 2003:27).



### **3.5.1 Factors that influence Immigrant Children's Completion of Homework**

Immigrant children's homework completion is influenced by varying factors that determine completion. The factors that determine whether immigrant children will do their homework include, *inter alia*, the immigrant child's individual personality, which is affected by their gender, region or country, academic engagement, learning style, and preferences (Moroni, Dumont, Trautwein, Niggli & Baeriswyl, 2015:420). This suggests that homework completion is gendered, with boys and girls differing in how they complete it. Other traits include home environment, where parents and siblings participate in helping children do homework. The school also plays a vital part in promoting or hindering homework completion. If schools provide an enabling environment for homework activities, it is likely that children will participate and in doing so, will improve their academic performance.

### **3.5.2 The Home Environment's Influence on Homework**

The type of educational material and the assistance immigrant children receive from their families' influences how children engage in their homework. Research has consistently shown that family type also influences whether a child will engage in homework, with children who have two-parent families more likely to complete homework compared to children who live in single-parent families (Prothrow-Stith & Quaday, 1995:27; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008:88). Children who have two parents are likely to receive homework assistance from one or both parents at home, as opposed to children of single parents who are restricted by work commitments and other parental duties that require their attention on a daily basis (Sibanda, 2014:36). Additionally, children from single-parent families may not have enough time to do homework because they may be engaged in household duties due to the non-availability of their parents who are likely to be working. According to Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard (2015:160), immigrant children from single-parent families "take on responsibilities that compete for time and energy for homework". Immigrant children may face other constraints, such as difficulties in doing their homework due to living in overcrowded places, circumstances in which they are responsible for helping siblings, or assisting in the family business (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008:27).

Immigrant children tend to move from place to place, and as a result, they are unable to attend school regularly and may perform below par because they often miss crucial lessons. This may affect their capabilities, as they may feel insecure and lack confidence to tackle homework on their own. The parents of immigrant children often struggle to assist because they are

unfamiliar with the host country's education curriculum. For example, Caille and O'Prey (2003:150) and Brinbaum and Kieffer (2005:193) concur that parental assistance is not forthcoming because they face challenges in offering help and advice to their children since they have insufficient knowledge about the host country's curriculum.

In the same vein, Shields and Behrman's (2004:4) American study found that most immigrant parents did not help their children with homework in their first year of secondary school, with some parents counting on their children to complete their homework on their own or with the help from the siblings. According to Moguerou and Santelli (2012:84), siblings also act as facilitators by providing educational support in immigrant families. Immigrant parents who provide homework assistance to their children feel that girls pay more attention to homework than boys (Núñez, Suárez, Cerezo, González-Pienda, Rosário & Mourao, 2013:4; Vandewater & Lee, 2006:181). They emphasise that girls spend less time watching television than boys and that although parents are unfamiliar with the host country's educational curriculum; they often help and encouragement to their children. The findings indicate that those children who spend more time studying and less time watching television fare better in school and have higher educational expectations that influence them to complete their homework.

### **3.5.3 The School Environment's Influence on Homework Completion**

The school environment also plays a significant role in determining whether children completes their homework. Most immigrant children come from families with low economic backgrounds, and therefore they commonly live in informal settlements, situated in areas that are characterised by a high unemployment rate, crime, and violence (Orfield & Lee, 2006:448). There is no adequate security provided for children at school, and as a result, these children feel insecure. In schools that are situated in underprivileged communities, there is a high rate of teacher turnover, many children drop out of school, and violence is common (Orfield & Lee, 2006:448). Violence hinders active participation at school and affects how children learn and perform their school activities.

In general, children who experience insecurity at school do not actively participate in school programmes (Garbarino, 2001:361). School learners who feel intimidated in unsafe environments are unlikely to do their homework for fear of victimisation. In fact, some learners avoid hotspot areas at schools, which they feel pose a danger to their lives. Such learners are unlikely to participate in school activities, including homework.

Boys and girls differ in how they interpret and react to perceived school environments. Boys are more affected by hostile environments at school than girls are. When boys feel unsafe at school, they tend to be withdrawn and seek protection by defending themselves. Prioritising protection implies that boys must forego other school activities, particularly doing homework. According to Prothrow-Stith and Quaday (1995:32), prioritising protection diminishes students' efforts to engage in homework if they must focus on staying safe.

Research indicates that girls are more likely to do their homework at school than boys, even if it is in an unsecure school environment (Suárez-Orozco & Qin, 2015:160; Xu, 2006:74). When girls are exposed to threats and/or are intimidated at school, they react by “redoubling their efforts on assignments”, perhaps as a way of countering unsafe incidents (Xu, 2006:74). After-school homework programmes offer a sanctuary to girls, as they feel these places offer adequate security to enable them to complete their work. After-school programmes enable learners to engage in homework effectively as they are provided with secure environments that optimise learning. An international study has found that after-school homework programmes contribute to greater homework completion while school violence decreases the likelihood of homework completion (Feliciano, 2009:31). This may imply that after-school homework programmes should be a prerequisite for immigrant children as they are designed to help them to improve on their academic achievement. As such, teachers should regularly provide homework activities to learners.

### **3.5.4 Teachers’ Perceptions on Homework and Homework Completion**

The lack of strategies to deal with homework completion may also negatively influence teachers’ perceptions of boys. For example, Xu’s (2006:74) Chinese study found that teachers reported that girls were more likely than boys to finish and turn in their homework on time. Furthermore, studies on gendered patterns of immigrant children conducted by Mead, (2006:16) and Yakaboski (2011:14) in America, found that teachers perceive girls more favourably than boys. López (2003:9) also found similar results. In the same vein, Suárez-Orozco, and Qin’s (2004:8) American study found that teachers perceived immigrant girls to excel academically and socially, more so than immigrant boys. Such teacher perceptions could be influenced by the girls’ attitudes towards their schoolwork and the way in which they interact with others at school.

### **3.5.5 Time Spent on Homework**

International research has shown that gender plays a significant role in influencing homework completion among boys and girls. It is globally accepted that boys spend less time on homework than girls (Kristin, 2015:2). The data obtained from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation in Canada found that, on average, boys spend 4.6 hours per week on homework, while girls spend 6.4 hours a week (Rushowy, 2015:1). Strydom (2015:23) also found that girls spend a lot of time doing homework and read for personal enjoyment and study for school. Suárez-Orozco and Qin (2006:270) established that 40% of girls compared to 19% of boys spent more than two hours per day on homework.

### **3.5.6 Strategies applied by Boys and Girls in Homework Completion**

Girls and boys do not make the same commitment to completing homework at home and school. Xu's (2006:74) research on gender differences show that compared with immigrant boys, most girls adopt different strategies when completing homework. Strategies that immigrant children apply in doing their schoolwork include workplace management, time allocation, and emotional monitoring while doing homework (Xu, 2006:74).

On the other hand, since immigrant parents more strictly control and monitor their daughters than their sons, immigrant girls have ample time at their disposal to engage in homework activities. Additionally, research on the link between performance and self-control has found that immigrant girls are goal-orientated and self-motivated and possess greater cognitive engagement than boys (Ablard & Lipschultz, 1998:30). There is also the possibility that boys' failure to use the same tactics applied by girls could lead to negative outcomes at schools. Boys could decide to drop out of school to avoid pressure applied by teachers and parents for poor academic achievement. According to Liu, Gong and Xiong (2016:2), the lack of immigrant boys' strategies to complete their homework may result in overall dissatisfaction with school, leading to lower education achievement and engagement in gang-related activities.

### **3.5.7 Homework and Ethnicity**

Homework completion has been found to be highly gendered across ethnic lines, with immigrant children from various ethnic groups spending different periods of time engaged in their work. Seal (2017:13) found that in the US, Asians and West Indian immigrant children spend more time engaged in homework activities than other nationalities, with Asian children spending twice as much time as other nationalities (Li, 2009:2). Suárez-Orozco's (2009:51)

American study established that Chinese girls spent more time on homework every day, whereas Mexican students and Dominican boys spent the least time on homework per year. The ethnic differences in homework performance may be linked to the immigrant child's country of origin, with immigrant families from some countries setting higher standards for their children. For example, East Asian children are known for their hard work and commitment at school. According to Kao (1995:122), Chinese children have been described as the 'minority model' because of their academic excellence in host countries. This credit could be given to immigrant parents' continuous encouragement and strong emphasis on education, suggesting that the family plays a major role in homework performance of their children.

### **3.6 ETHNIC IDENTITY AT SCHOOL**

Currently there is no South African research concerned with the gendered experiences of immigrant children in schools. Schools are powerful institutions in which immigrant children form their identity through formal and/or informal channels. At schools and through social interactions, immigrant children classify themselves according to their countries of origin or the host country. For example, immigrant children may classify themselves as South Africans, Nigerians, Zambians, or Ethiopians, among others. This identification enables immigrant children to form a "sense of belonging" or "non-belonging" to the host country.

#### **3.6.1 Immigrant Children's Identity Formation**

Immigrant students face significant challenges in identity formation while at school and in the communities in which they live. The 2008 xenophobic attacks created uncertainty and engendered fear in migrants living in South Africa, and more so in their children. Many immigrants are verbally and sometime physically abused, and as such, these immigrants devise different strategies to survive in the hostile environments in which they work and/or live. According to Phinney and Ong (2007:140) and Suárez-Orozco (2004:4), it is possible that immigrant children try different identification strategies "steadily from a stage of ethnic or racial unawareness to one of exploration to a final stage of an achieved sense of racial or ethnic identity".

It can be argued then, that during this stage, identity formation continuously shifts to and from through a negotiated pathway until a stable or an appropriate condition is reached. Marcia (1980:4) posits that identity formation is an "internal self-constructed", dynamic organisation of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual histories that facilitate an individual's psychosocial

differentiation from others. Identity formation is influenced by the social environment in which immigrant children are socialised, and thus identity is "socially constructed" (Suárez-Orozco, 2004:4). If identity formation is socially constructed, this implies that various cultural and ethnic groups adopt different strategies to achieve self-identification in a host country, reflecting the diverse composition and background of immigrant children in host countries' schools

Psychologists speak of a "social mirror" during immigrant children's identity formation in host countries (Vandeyar, 2011:5). The child's self-image is fundamentally influenced by the reflections they receive from those around them (Rees & Nicholson, 1994:40). People rely on the feedback about themselves mirrored by their family, peer groups, the school, and the community at large. A positive reflection from significant others implies a high self-esteem, while a negative reflection may imply worthlessness.

### **3.6.2 The Family's Influence in Identity Formation**

International research of different nationalities and cultural ethnicities has revealed that identity formation is based on a social mirror and that it is deeply gendered, with the family playing a leading role in influencing immigrant children's adaptations. Cultural transmission is regarded as crucial by immigrant parents, and as such, immigrant children are socialised to maintain and guard against situations that threaten to destroy and/or interfere with their home culture.

For example, Bernhard, Freire and Pacini (1998:74) established that Latin American parents found that Canadian elementary schools often emphasised dominant cultural norms for language and cultural capital that made their children feel deficient and marginalised. These parents resisted this by socialising girls to be "keepers of culture" (Suárez-Orozco, 2014:13). To preserve the original culture and norms from the country of origins, immigrant girls are socialised to be keepers of the family culture. For example, Dion and Dion's (2001:511) research with Canadian youth found that strict parental control on daughters and stronger emphasis of family values contribute to girls' sense of ethnic identity development, more so than in boys. According to Calzada, Fernandez and Cortes (2010:77), girls from immigrant families are strongly socialised to be primary transmitters of cultural values and traditions. As such, girls were more likely than boys to be connected to their ethnic background (Stritiku & Nguyen, 2007:853). There is some truth in this, since girls appear to enjoy more home comforts and greater parental control and monitoring than boys do. Immigrant children, who identify more strongly with the cultural values of their country of origin than with the culture of their

host country, are more likely to perform well at school (Fuligni & Witkow, 2004:134; García-Coll & Marks, 2011:134).

### **3.6.3 The Classroom's Influence on Immigrant Children's Identity Formation**

Schools are battlegrounds for immigrant children where gender identity takes place, particularly between new arrivals and children from the host country. Immigrant children face many obstacles in locating themselves and establishing who they really are in a hostile environment such as a school.

For both girls and boys, the identity formation and processes include constant struggles to make or break from being marginalised, and from being ethnically and culturally different from the host children. Based on the treatment that immigrant children receive from the host country's children, hostilities may develop between the two groups, leading to physical altercations. Aggressive behaviour often develops because immigrant children get mixed messages that they interpret as "racist" and "stereotypical" and aimed at them. For example, within the South African context, immigrant children are often referred to as '*makwerekwere*' (Vandeyar, 2011:5) by teachers and the host country's children.

Such discrimination is denigrating to immigrant children's sense of self, and they may then come to experience the institutions of the dominant society as alien terrains reproducing an order of inequality (De Vos & Suárez-Orozco, 1990:6). According to Ainslie (1998:283), as a result, immigrant children growing up where discrimination is present are likely to "act out" and are more likely to engage in illicit behaviours. Being mischievous is a way of seeking recognition and improving their social recognition or standing.

International research has established that immigrant children engage in antisocial behaviour as a way of seeking social status and or recognition (Larry, Siegel, Brandon, Siegel & Larry, 2017:130). Research conducted by Suárez-Orozco (2002:41) found that immigrant boys from the Philippines and other nationalities in America developed an inclination to derive their self-worth or identity by engaging in antisocial behaviours. Similarly, some research indicates that some immigrant boys who enjoyed an ethnic social standing feel they are being side-lined by the host community and may react by dropping out of school (Osman 2009:57). According to Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco and Todorova(2009:204), immigrant boys develop a more 'oppositional relationship' to schooling than girls, and view the educational system as a threat to their identity. Connell (2000:6) posits that displaying "protest masculinity" combined with

structural obstacles traps immigrant boys at risk of low educational achievement and delinquency. In the same vein, Messerschmidt (1993:84) labelled boys engaging in antisocial behaviour to obtain recognition as “masculine posturing”; the persona power struggle with other immigrants is a tool for building certain types of masculinity amongst the street elite and a fight for dominance.

In Prieur’s (2002:53) related development research in Norway on the gang and criminal fantasy of immigrant boys as a ‘subcultural form’ of masculinity, it was determined that boys who lacked positive role models in other domains were strongly influenced by the African American culture, which emphasises respect and honour, and competence in such activities as dancing and sports. In a similar study, Phinney’s (2003:46) research among ethnically diverse groups of immigrant children from Hawaii and the Philippines found that both boys and girls are involved in antisocial behaviour. However, for boys such antisocial behaviour was a way of gaining social status and standing on the streets, while for girls it was a reaction against abuse and sexual and physical assault. This suggests that deviant behaviours are not the domain of boys alone, but that girls also sometimes engage in them.

In Hughes, Hagelskamp, Way and Foust’s (2009:605) American study, girls stated that they improved their social standing and self-esteem through fights within their peer groups. Girls noted that they fought not only to protect themselves from other girls, but also to be popular because they were probably disliked, but when they fought and won the fight, people looked up to them. During this research, one immigrant girl described how physical fights within the peer group sent a message: “It’s like basically saying, I’m not playing with you” (Hughes et al., 2009:605).

Thus, peer group attachment is vital to gender and ethnic identity formation, as many immigrant children in school use group or gang affiliation to provide protection and/or to help them improve their social status. According to Lee and Hebert (2006:497), immigrant children rely on peer groups to cope with the difficulties in new settings and to ease isolation and anxiety. Association with same-sex, racial and ethnic peer group improves immigrant children’s gender and racial identity (Maynard & Harding, 2010:640). Tarrant (2002:24) posits that vital traits of identity formation, both overt and subtle processes of gender socialisation, are also learned in the family, and are reinforced in peer groups, schools, and the community.



### **3.6.4 The Role of Ethnicity in Identity Formation**

Identity formation takes on ethnic dimensions and is gendered. In analysing a five-year LISA data of over 400 students from China, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and some countries in Central America, Qin (2006:9) established that although in their first year there were no gender differences in ethnic identities among immigrant children, after five years, boys were significantly more likely than girls to identify with their culture of origin. A similar study conducted by Wu, Schimmele, and Hou (2010:5) on ethnic identity, found that close to 85% of respondents assumed their adopted country's identity, and that within five years, the gender differences between girls and boys were visible. This applied to all ethnic groups, especially those from the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Central America. The gap in gender differences may stem from country of origin, background, and gender socialisation at home and in schools.

The adoption of the country of origin's identity strategy is the immigrant child's attempt to "challenge and resist" the negative social mirroring and stereotypes they encounter (Vandeyar, 2011:5). Phinney (2005:187), Suárez-Orozco (2004:6), and Sirin and Fine (2008:151) collectively agree that identity goes through many processes during adolescence, because it is during this period that the individual experiments with different identity strategies. Marcia (1966:3) and Erikson (1968:3) are of the view that children go through the process of "ethnic" or "racial unawareness" to one of "exploration", and to the final stage of an "achieved sense of racial identity". Suárez-Orozco (2000:193) points out that children attempt to transverse discontinuous cultural, political, and economic spaces, which tend to lean towards one of the dominant styles and of adaptation, that is, ethnic flight, adversarial and bicultural. Those who adopt ethnic flight attempt to set themselves free from the family and their ethnic influence (Qin, 2003:8). Those who opt for the adversarial style attempt to reject being assimilated into the identity of the dominant culture (Rumbaut, 1996:17).

According to Vaughn (2015:35), children act out defensively to resist negative social mirroring. The bicultural style adopts "transnational strategies" (Vaughn, 2015:35). Children who use the transnational strategy are "cultural brokers" who oscillate between the home culture and the host culture (Suárez-Orozco, 2014:51). Children who rely on the transactional strategy alternate between the attributes of one or more cultures – the country of origin cultures and the host cultures.

### **3.6.5 The Bicultural Approach as a Form of Identity Formation**

International research has revealed higher gender differences in the transactional strategies of ethnic identity that immigrant children adopt (Qin, 2008:27). For example, Paat and Pellebon (2012:127) conducted research amongst immigrant children and found that girls were more likely than boys to adopt a bicultural approach when constructing their ethnic identity. In a study of Caribbean immigrant children, Waters (1994:859) found that girls felt less pressure than boys to adopt racialised identities, thus enabling them to be more flexible in their identity formation. In the same vein, Qin-Hilliard (2003:14) found that girls are more likely than boys to choose “additive” or “hyphenated identities” to bridge the two cultures.

Theories of ethnic and social identity formation, that is, transactional strategies, adopted by immigrant children help us to understand their gendered experiences at school. Esteban-Guitart, Lalueza, Zhang-Yu and Llopart (2019:3400) established that those immigrant children who adopt complex “transcultural identities” perform better in school than those who either seek to integrate fully or retreat into “adversarial identities” in conflict with the host society. For example, Morgan and Simmons (2014:61) conducted research with Central American immigrant children and found that youths from this region develop a dual and hybrid or hyphenated identity that is linked to how they relate to the wider community. In a similar study performed by Poteet and Simons (2014:61) among Central American immigrant children in Toronto, it was found that they adopted a flexible ethno-social identity that permitted them to be accepted in diverse communities, and this adoption was to prevent being rejected. Berry, Pinney, Sam and Vedale (2006:2) found similar results.

Moreover, immigrant children who are marginalised and rejected in their host countries' schools may adopt double-barrel identities, one for the country of origin, and another for the host country, to maintain friendships with peers. Such children expand their social interaction and seek friends within and outside their ethno-social boundaries. For example, Bousalis (2016:20) established that most immigrant children established friendships with other youth who excelled at school, while also creating relationships with youths who were rebellious towards school authorities. Such behaviours imply that some immigrant children may belong to two groups that have different objectives, so that they can simultaneously have fun and avoid rejection from their peers. For example, Alfredo, an immigrant child from Central America in Toronto had this to say on the subject: “I was trying to find myself. I was kinda of into the

stereo types of the Latino, gangbanger, smoking weed, drinking and partying” (Bousalis, 2014:20).

Some immigrant children belong to two groups in school: the peer group from the host country, whom the immigrant children believe will help them to improve academically, and those groups from the home country, to avoid rejection (Qin, 2009:37). Suárez-Orozco’s (2001:4) study conducted among Latin American (Latino) immigrant children established that children who belonged to two groups sought to define themselves as exceptions to the negative stereotype of the Latino as troublemakers and dropouts. Such action meant that they rejected creating relationships with children from their country of origin, while at the same time they relied on co-Latino norms and values that were aligned to those of the host country. Oyserman (2008:276) found that Latino eighth graders who emphasised a positive sense of belonging to the Latino community in conjunction with their groups’ contributions to society, exhibited better academic performance. As cited by Poteet and Simmons (2014:61), one Latino immigrant student said: “I always saw myself as Salvadorian, and I was proud of it. And I wanted everybody to know about it”.

Immigrant children who adopt such a stance do not necessarily reject their peers from their country of origin, but this might be an indication that maintaining friendships and establishing an identity is a very complex task that requires fluidity and shifting identity for one to achieve equilibrium. This task involves establishing friendships with different groups, one from the host country and the other from the home country, to receive protection and to be accepted by both groups. Belonging to both groups also reduces the chances of being stereotyped and marginalised by children and teachers from the host country.

### **3.6.6 The Use of Transnational Space as a Form of Identity Formation**

Some immigrants use various networks to maintain their ethnic identity by constantly communicating with relatives and friends back home. The introduction of modern technology has seen an unprecedented level of increased communication across borders, no matter how far away. According to Wise and Covarrubias (2009:48), immigrant children use transnational spaces within their communities to help maintain cultural and ethnic ties with distant relatives.

The notion that people belong to one country that is defined by uniform national norms and cultural identity is long gone. Even countries such as the US, which has tried to barricade its borders to control the influx of immigrants, have found it difficult to achieve this objective.

Immigrants use transnational spaces that go beyond borders to maintain their ties to relatives in their countries. The cultural and ethnic identities of immigrant children are maintained through activities that allow them to cross borders across continents.

"Crossing the Border" is the immigrant child's ability to engage with two or more social and cultural worlds to maintain their ethnic and cultural identity across borders. At the same time, gender identity also plays itself out in schools and in the classroom where the quest for recognition and dominance takes place.

### **3.6.7 Identity Formation Strategies adopted by Immigrant Children in South Africa**

Some immigrant children, especially those in Africa, invoke the "I am an African" mantra, which is a "Continental" discourse to create identity formation and acceptance while in the host country. A study by Vandeyar (2011:6) on immigrant students' shifting identities in South African schools is the only one available on the subject at present. Although the study is general and does not delve into gender issues in depth, it offers a general review of identity formation of immigrant children in South African schools, and therefore, it is used as a point of reference in this study. The following paragraphs interrogate Vandeyar's (2011:6) research on how immigrant children develop identity formation in South African schools.

According to Vandeyar (2011:7), immigrant children in South African schools find it easy to assimilate into the host country because they rely on "psychosocial passing". Immigrant children also claim that they depend on psychosocial passing because of what they claim are xenophobic attacks against foreigners, which Vandeyar calls "politically motivated", in the sense that South Africa's political situation regarding immigrants is unpredictable, and, as a result, immigrant children adopt the psychosocial passing strategy in which they "pass" for local black children.

The term "pass" is borrowed from America where blacks with light complexions behaved as though they were white Americans (Vandeyar, 2011:7). From a South Africa perspective, it refers to black immigrant children who "pass" for local black children because of physical similarities, i.e. their black skin colour (Vandeyar, 2011:7). Vandeyar, (2011:7) reported that one schoolteacher had this to say:

*I can honestly say, I have not once noticed that the girls treat them any differently from a South African Zulu girl or a South African Xhosa girl or a South African Sotho girl,*

*they look the same. It is very difficult to tell them apart physically* (Ms Wilson, Grade 10 teacher).

In a similar vein, an immigrant student from the same school stated:

*Well, they didn't see me as an immigrant. I was just like one of them. So, I just let them go on believing that I am one of them. I don't let them know that I am an immigrant* (Vena, from Zimbabwe) (Vandeyar, 2011:7).

The immigrant children could thus 'pass' easily, unnoticed by the teacher or local students. Vandeyar's (2011:7) investigation was carried out at a former model C school where the medium of communication was English, making it very difficult for immigrant children to identify with their peers. Additionally, most immigrant children use their blackness to "act out" as if they were South African, yet in reality they disassociated themselves from the host children, pointing out their lack of respect for the elderly and their general behaviour at large (Vandeyar, 2011:8).

Some immigrant children stated that they ventured to help local children to change their attitudes towards education, after realising that the major differences they had with their host peers was not their black colour per se, but rather in their personality traits. Their willingness to help also indicates that many immigrant children are willing to integrate, but because they are labelled as '*makwerekwere*' (a derogatory term used locally to refer to black Africans from countries north of South Africa) and discriminated against, they are pushed to come up with innovative survival strategies.

Other immigrants, to identify themselves, have assumed the "I am an African or continental" approach. The "I am an African" slogan was popularised during the liberation struggle in various African countries that pledged solidarity to each other to liberate their countries from white rule. As a result, many African countries contributed militarily, materially, and/or offered moral support to South Africa during the struggle against white rule. As such, many people from those African countries who helped to liberate South Africa believe that 'as Africans, we are one'. So, the continental undertones are more politically motivated and at the same time a reminder to South Africans that "We helped you achieve independence as Africans". For example, the following comment was extracted from research on immigrant children's identity formation in South African schools. "I don't classify myself as 'black' according to South African racial categories. I am coffee brown. I am an African, since like them (South Africans)

I too am from the continent of Africa. How can the South Africans call me a *Makwerekwere*?” (Andrew Ghana in Vandeyar, 2011:9)

Classification according to one's race and colour may indicate that the South African legacy of apartheid still influences South Africans' livelihoods; hence, classification is politically motivated. In the same vein, immigrant children are indignant at being labelled “*makwerekwere*”, which signals that they are black foreigners and do not belong in South Africa. This derogatory label is used by black South Africans to classify foreigners in a manner that perpetuates discrimination and victimisation.

Vandeyar's (2011:9) research indicates the many ways in which immigrant children identify themselves and shows how they rely on the use of bicultural and transactional strategies to integrate into South African communities. Falsifying, by claiming a hyphenated identification, allows immigrant children to be wholly accepted into the communities in which they live while simultaneously taking pride in their racialised differences that the majority consider cause for exclusion (Skrobanek, 2009:535).

### **3.7 IMMIGRANT CHILDREN'S GENDER AND EDUCATIONAL /SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES**

Gender socialisation at school is the way boys and girls learn about social expectations, attitudes, and behaviours linked to whether one is female or male (Bigler, Hayes & Hamilton, 2013:133). The school environment plays a significant role in determining how immigrant children are exposed to gendered experiences, and how these influence their educational/schooling experiences. The experiences that girls and boys encounter at school result in gendered-related skills and knowledge, and they influence how children socialise themselves in gendered ways. In the following section, the researcher discusses the learners' gendered experiences at school.

#### **3.7.1 Peers' Influences on the Immigrant Children's Gendered Experiences**

Schools are institutions where gender socialisation takes place every day, as immigrant children spend most of their time establishing friendships and relationships with individuals and/or their peers across ethnic and cultural spheres. Dunne (2007:27) posits that the school is a highly gendered institution that is characterised by social relationships and support. Social relationships are highly compromised and are based on gender, while friendships and associations are based on whether one is a girl or a boy. For example, it is common to visit a

school and find that immigrant girls and boys are clustered in different groups according to gender and ethnicity both inside and outside the classroom.

Within these gendered groups, immigrant girls and boys exhibit dissimilar play, group norms, behaviour, attitudes and even group size (Legewie & DiPrete, 2012:463). This also means that within these peer groups, immigrant children learn the values, beliefs, and behaviours of the host country (Masten & Cicchetti, 2010:491), including learning about its social and cultural life (Valenzuela, 1999:611). Like the family, peer groups function as agents of gender socialisation, where gender roles and behaviours are learned. According to Leaper and Friedman (2007:704), a peer group strongly reinforces traditional gender roles and does not allow any gender behaviours and actions from the other group to filter through, with immigrant boys experiencing more pressure to conform to the group norms than girls.

Within the school context, immigrant boys and girls differ in their reading ability and how they behave in class. The school can increase or decrease gendered differences by providing enabling environments that support inclusion or exclusion between gendered groups.

The above discussion indicates that there are several factors that influence the gendered experiences in immigrant children schooling. The major differences in girls and boys occur within the domain of peer interaction and peer groups. In a detailed study of Mexican American immigrant social networks in schools, Stanton-Salazar (2001:12) found that boys' school-based relationships were less supportive than girls' school-based relationship. He also found that boys had lower school-based supportive interactions than girls, whose interactions were very high. A similar study conducted by Suárez-Orozco and Qin (2004:12) found similar results. In line with the above, Qin's (2003:13) LISA study found that Chinese girls were more likely than Chinese boys to have friends who were serious about schoolwork and academically supportive. Qin's (2006:11) study established that although an equal number of boys and girls had the same number of peers from their own ethnic groups, girls perceived their friends to possess more positive attitudes towards school than the boys did. These girls said that their friends clarified difficult concepts to them, while boys said their friends did not offer them any support. This is confirmed in Qin's (2003:13) study, which found that in comparison to immigrant boys, immigrant girls were more likely to have peers who were serious about school, and they were also more supportive.

While girls received worthwhile advice from their peers, boys were more likely to receive unsuitable advice from their peers. For example, Qin's (2006:11) American study established

that more boys (24%) than girls (18%) reported that their friends had at one point encouraged them to bunk lessons. This trend was also found across ethnic groups, with both Mexican boys and girls saying that their friends had encouraged them to bunk classes. There was also the likelihood that boys could prevent their peers from achieving at school, because boys perceive good results as the girls' domain. Male peers might interpret getting along with the teacher or excelling in school as feminine pursuits, and they may label academic achievement as feminine (Legewie & DiPrete, 2012:463). This view is confirmed by research conducted on white students in America, who pointed out that the school is a feminine institution where teachers favour girls in the classroom setting (Connel, 2000:475).

According to the GST, boys will downgrade what they interpret as feminine, and therefore might avoid school and associating with their female teachers (Ewing & Taylor, 2009:27-28). Van Houtte's (2004:354) study in Belgium found that immigrant students' feelings toward and motivations for learning, as well as their study-related beliefs, were influenced by their peers. In a study examining the effects on pressure groups between boys and girls in England, Warrington, Younger and Williams (2000:77) established that while it was acceptable for girls to put more effort into their classwork, boys who tried to achieve similarly in the classroom were likely to be side-lined by their peers.

Suárez-Orozco et al. (2014:155) research on immigrant children's experiences in the classroom in America also found that girls were closer, more loyal, and more obedient to their teachers and to their peers. They also established that peer influence influenced the children's attitudes towards their teachers and further observed that girls' peer groups promoted cooperation and loyalty to teachers in comparison to boys who chose not to cooperate with their teachers. It is evident that boys' and girls' social interactions influence their behaviour at school and may be responsible for influencing the teachers' attitudes at school. This is acceptable to girls and boys because they are likely to associate with teachers of the same gender.

This positive networking among immigrant girls and boys could be related to the realisation that coming together in challenging circumstances is more beneficial than facing the situation alone. According to Suárez-Orozco, Pimentel, and Martin (2009:717), peer interactions benefit the child by providing protective functions, a sense of belonging, emotional support, tangible assistance and information, cognitive guidance, and positive feedback. It has been found that peer friendships and relationships are vital for pro-social behaviours that contribute to educational achievement and participation in school (Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004:60; Lee,



2012:35). For example, peer relationships and friendships offer emotional support that is vital for psychosocial development in immigrant children (Lindsey & Mantz, 2017:17). Peers may act as shock absorbers by shielding immigrant children from bullying and other harmful actions within the school.

From previous discussions, it is evident that peer relationships and friendships help provide academic support and engagement, and assist each other inside and outside the school, as immigrant children do homework together. While this may be true, De Paola and Brunello (2017:1) point out that because immigrant youth are often placed in disadvantaged schools, they have limited access to networks of their knowledgeable peers. The above discussions have highlighted that children's social relationship and interactions are not only confined to peers but also include staff members at school and influence the attitudes and behaviours of teachers.

### **3.7.2 Teachers' Influences on Immigrant Children's Gendered Experiences**

Some teachers promote ethnic and cultural gender socialisation in schools by showing bias towards one gender over the other. Such favouring could intentionally and/or unintentionally contribute to the teachers' attitudes in dealing differently with girls and boys at school. Gender-related activities that are practised in schools include arranging school activities according to gendered patterns. For example, sweeping is allocated to girls while boys are allocated the responsibility of moving tables. Sometimes teachers have the tendency to offer greetings to boys first when they enter the class or during assembly. For example, "Good morning, boys and girls" is a very common phrase teachers use when learners enter the class. During assembly girls and boys are required to stand in separate lines. Teacher's actions or directives increase children's gender stereotyping and encourage girls and boys to avoid gender playmates of the opposite sex (Bigler et al., 2013:1).

International research has shown that teachers interact more closely with girls and are more likely to clash with boys (King & Gurian, 2006; 4). However, these gender interactions are more noticeable at an early age than in later years (Barbu, Cabanes & Maner-Idrissi, 2011:7). For example, in their research on preschool children, Ewing and Taylor (2009:92) found that immigrant girls related better to their teachers than immigrant boys did, even though the differences were negligible (López, 2003:7). Qin (2006:12) also found similar results.

In research on gendered experiences in American schools, Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hillard (2004:30) established that teachers considered immigrant girls to be more successful

academically and to be more social than boys. Girls, as opposed to their male counterparts, were also likely to engage more easily with teachers and to develop improved interactions (López, 2003:30).

In line with the Symbolic Interactionism Model, prejudices against boys and favourable treatment of girls stimulates discriminatory conduct and attitudes adopted by immigrant children, eventually leading to gendered experiences in schools (Pereira, Vala & Costa-Lopes, 2010:23). Certainly teachers often recognise positive attributes that are related to the school achievement; for example, loyalty, responsibility and discipline are linked to girls, while negative traits such as hyper activity, lack of discipline and destructiveness in the classroom are linked to boys (Reddy, Rhodes & Mulhall, 2003:119). The positive attributes that teachers ascribe to girls' behaviours contribute to a change in teachers' attitudes towards immigrant girls. Other factors that encourage closer relationships between immigrant girls and their teachers are that girls appear to be satisfied with school life and thus have fewer clashes with teachers than boys.

Interviews conducted with teachers reveal that the school offers girls a less restrictive space, and this enhances the opportunity to develop social relationships (Abbot & Barber, 2011:33). Research on immigrant children in the United States of America reveals that children who are disgruntled with the school environment feel isolated and are likely to underperform at school (Meehan, Hughes & Cavell, 2003:1147). According to Lee and Breen (2007:17), dropouts frequently point to harmful experiences at school as impediments to their educational aspirations.

The closeness of immigrant teachers to girls may be a result of gender role socialisation at home. In earlier discussions, it was mentioned that immigrant families adopt stronger parental controls and monitoring and establish closer relationships with girls than with boys (Qin, 2003:11). The close ties that immigrant girls have with their parents in their homes, could be transferred to establish positive interactions with their teachers at school. When boys are at home, they are socialised to be independent and have fewer intimate relationships with the family. The same applies when they are at school, and they keep a distance from schoolteachers. Additionally, strict parental control at home may lead to unexpected outcomes such that girls view the school as a place where they invest their energy and gain pleasure as well as freedom, and experience fewer social constraints (Nelson, Yang, Coyne, Olsen & Hart, 2013:5).

The GST suggests that children identify with what suits their own gender (Bem, 1981:5). Most of the teachers in primary schools are female; it is possible that girls label these teachers as gender-appropriate, while boys might classify these women as gender inappropriate to them. This implies that girls are likely to be closer to female teachers; boys, on the other hand, may be closer to male teachers, which brings the “same gender-teacher” relationship into focus (Bem, 1981:5).

### **3.7.3 The Influence of the Classroom Social Environment on Immigrant Children’s Gendered Experiences**

The daily life of immigrant children in host countries’ schools is gendered, with boys likely to perceive the school environment more negatively than girls. In a study conducted in America, Miller (2015:1) found that boys tend to experience the school environment and interactions with school personnel more negatively than their female counterparts. The perception that boys may feel unwanted by the school personnel is likely to result in their being less likely to invest in school, and this may impact on their academic performance (Valenzuela, 1999:15) and behaviour. Therefore, the immigrant children’s interpretation of the school environment is a vital component of schooling/education and is linked to their school achievement.

Immigrant children react differently to negative interpretations of the school environment. Feliciano (2012:5) argues that boys and girls construct masculinity and femininity very differently, with boys likely to defy school rules as a way of protest to the status quo. For example, Gibson (1987:9) points out those immigrant boys of Indian origin display their masculinity, challenging the school rules, and in contrast, immigrant girls show their femininity in their positive behaviour and their attitude towards school. Similarly, research conducted in Europe attests to immigrant boys from Pakistan and West India in Britain (Dwyer, Moodad, Sanghera, Shah & Bjorkert, 2006:44) and of Turkish immigrants in Norway (Prieur, 2002:15) and Ecuadorians in Italy (Palmas & Torre, 2005:118) displaying problematic behaviour in comparison to their female counterparts. The manifestation of antisocial behaviour is a show of defiance to authority, and a way of seeking respect and honour from their peers. For example, it is common for boys to display rude and aggressive behaviour towards authority while simultaneously gaining status within their peer group. Steinberg’s (2007:55) study in America found that peer pressure was higher for boys to engage in antisocial behaviour than it was for girls. Qin’s (2004:14) study on Chinese children in America found similar results.

The difference in girls' and boys' behaviour could be attributed to gender socialisation at home, specifically in the country of origin. For boys, their dislike of the school environment could lead them astray and away from schooling/educational activities, thus affecting their academic achievement. Besides, whereas boys depict a fragmented personality concerning school actions and future goal orientation, girls realise that acquiring an education is most likely to lead to acquiring a decent profession. In his protracted study of immigrant children in the United States of America, Willis (1997:1) observed that chauvinism appeared to be a means of revolt against the restrictions against social mobility, whereas women expressed feminism as a tactic to obey community norms and values and to fight race and gender disparities.

Furthermore, breaking of school rules is likely to lead to clashes between immigrant boys and school authorities, particularly teachers. In studying the process of adaptation among immigrant Latino youth in America, Cammaroto (2004:53) highlights the strained relationships between immigrant boys and school personnel, which often result in teachers criminalising and labelling these young immigrants as problematic. Tense interaction between teachers and immigrant boys was also reported in a study of primary school teachers, where it was reported that teachers in general have more conflict with boys than they do with girls (Barker, 2006:211; O'Connor, 2010:187). This is likely to influence a change of attitude in both teachers and immigrant boys towards each other.

Teachers interviewed by Thomas and Stevenson (2009:160) in the US described immigrant boys as lazy, aggressive, and less academically inclined than girls. Such negative descriptions can impact immigrant boys' performance, their psychological wellbeing, and their coping strategies (Viñas, González, García, Malo & Casas, 2015:226). At the same time by triggering negative perceptions, teachers are solidifying a self-fulfilling prophecy (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2002:4). For example, the teachers' perception about a child may result in a child entirely acting in ways that confirm the teachers' perceptions.

Furthermore, research shows that teachers are inconsistent in maintaining their treatment of learners in school. Dunne and Leach (2005:22) conducted research in Botswana and established that boys claimed that teachers showed preferential treatment to girls, and they connected this treatment to male teachers' approach for sexual favours, and cited teacher-student affairs. However, some research believes that preferential treatment given to girls is influenced by the fact that most primary school teachers are women, and as such, they are unlikely to tolerate 'expressions' fuelled by 'masculinity' (Qin-Hillard, 2003:100). Moreover, teachers appear to

be softer on girls and can tolerate and manage interaction with girls in a more positive way (Gregory & Huang, 2013:5). For example, Bian et al. (2017:389) observed that teachers use gentle terms, such as “honey” and “sweetie” to address girls but use a general “you guy” when speaking to the entire class. Thus, in comparison to girls, boys appear to have poor interactions with teachers, but girls appear to obtain more support from teachers (Eliasson, Sørensen, & Karlsson, 2016:30). According to Eliasson et al. (2016:30), men demand and receive more attention from their teachers, and as a result obtain specific, instructive feedback from teachers.

This preferential treatment may be a source of concern and conflict in the classroom. Research conducted by Archer and Francis (2007:9) reveals that teachers classified Chinese immigrant boys as good and serious students, while girls were interpreted as “repressed” and “passive”. Such labelling and stereotyping might trigger hostilities among children. Research consistently shows that teachers’ conduct significantly affects immigrant children’s general conduct at school (Mark, 2013:338). Conflicts between Latinas, African American students, and Asian immigrants have been recorded because these students believed that Asian students are preferred and treated better than Latino students (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004:420). Teachers labelled Latino boys as delinquent and lazy, and this led to these boys losing concentration during lessons (Katz, 1999:809). For the Asian children who were labelled hard working, they showed signs of motivation, while for others it made them aware of stereotyping within the school system (Goyette & Yu, 1999:34). It could be argued that teachers’ classification of immigrant children reveals two major racialised stereotypes: a classification that inculcates the stereotype of dedicated Asian children and the stereotype of the inactive Latina children. Furthermore, it also confirms that teachers have incredible impact regarding how racially and ethnically constructed gender is at school.

In a similar research, Qin (2006:167) found that 75% of immigrant children pointed out that there was strong dislike between those students who were bilingual and those who were non-bilingual. For example, a girl aged 12 from Mexico had this to say:

*They (bilingual and non-bilingual) get along poorly. They yell a ton of bad words. They are most in trouble with the principal. Those who speak English shout out bad words to those who do not speak English.*

Divisions and misunderstanding among various cultural and ethnic groups are bound to exist considering the composition and diversity of immigrant children in host schools.

International research has revealed that racial and ethnic discrimination was common in all racial, ethnic, and cultural groups that make up immigrant children (López, 2003:10). For example, Verkuyten and Kinket (2010:467) conducted research on ethnic and racial hierarchies in the classroom in the US and found that ethnic minorities tended to have lower status and were seen less favourably than their peers. The authors suggest that inherent negative group stereotypes operate within the same group. These implicit stereotypes breed divisions that may lead to physical altercations and increase in bullying, with immigrant boys being involved more often in fights than girls.

Compared to immigrant girls, boys were more likely to be subjected to racial and ethnic discrimination. Pohl and Way (2006:1403) and Rivas, Drake, Hughes and Way (2008:12) observed that discrimination based on ethnic composition was rife and was the major contributing factor to crime and delinquent behaviour in schools. For example, Shaddock, Giorcell and Smith's (2007:2) study found that boys were more affected by crime and gang violence at school than girls were. During the interviews, more than half of the children – 75% of Dominican boys and 64% of Mexican boys – said that they felt unsafe at school. To protect themselves from school violence, some boys formed their own gangs.

For example, Carl, a 14-year-old Chinese boy, who often witnessed other children bullying Chinese students and calling them names, decided to form a gang to provide protection for his Chinese peers and himself. Carl's gang called itself "wicked kids" (Qin, 2004:9). However, because Carl concentrated more on defending his peers and less on schooling, his academic performance declined and his teachers were fearful he would drop out of school (Qin, 2003:183). This implies that racial and ethnic discrimination at school has a negative impact on immigrant children's schooling. It may also be an indication that boys who grow up experiencing discrimination often deviate from acceptable social norms (Chesney-Lind, 1989: 5-29), and they are less likely to engage at school, are likely to "act out" and to engage in illicit behaviour (Feliciano, 2009:145).

### **3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The review of previous studies was based on two gender development theories, the CDT, and the GST. Furthermore, the literature review looked at the influence of the family, peers, the school, and the social environment on the gender development experiences of immigrant children in their host countries. Previous studies revealed that the family, peers, the school, and the social environment played an important role in developing gender role experiences in

children. Within these institutions, gender role development is consciously and unconsciously promoted; with men and women clearly showing differentiated gendered experiences.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapter reviewed the literature on gender development theories and the international literature on the gendered experiences of immigrant children at home and at school and peer influence. The emphasis of this study was to explore the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools.

The current chapter provides a detailed description of the research strategies that were used in the study. The chapter describes the research paradigms, the research methodology and design used in the study. Furthermore, data collection methods, the choice of the research site, and subject selection are outlined. The processes and procedures of data analysis and interpretation are also discussed to further enhance a deep understanding of the gendered experiences of immigrant children in schools. Lastly, the ethical considerations are outlined in this chapter. The following section discusses the philosophical assumptions and research paradigm used in the study.

#### **4.2 PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND RESEARCH PARADIGMS**

This section discusses the philosophical assumptions of this study.

Different researchers are aligned to a set of beliefs and philosophical assumptions about the phenomenon they are studying and these shapes, guide and give direction to the study being undertaken. All three research approaches, that is, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies have underlying philosophical assumptions, namely, ontological, and epistemological assumptions that are linked to the research method selected for the study.

Table 4.1 illustrates the kinds of knowledge claims (paradigms) that influence researchers' assumptions on how they should conduct research and what they will do during the study. Paradigms are all-encompassing interrelated practices and thinking that define for researchers the nature of the enquiry along three dimensions, that is, ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006:6).



Table 4.1: Metatheoretical assumptions of positivist vs interpretivist research

Metatheoretical assumptions	Positivism	Interpretivism/constructivism
<b>Ontology</b>	The person (researcher) and reality are separate.	The person (researcher) and reality are inseparable (lifeworld).
<b>Epistemology</b>	Objective reality exists beyond.	Knowledge of the world is intentionally constituted through a person's lived experience.
<b>Research object</b>	The research object has inherent qualities that exist independently of the researcher.	The research object is interpreted in the light of the meaning structure of a person's (researcher's) lived experience.
<b>Method</b>	Statistics, content analysis.	Hermeneutics, phenomenology, etc.
<b>Theory of truth</b>	Correspondence theory of truth: one-to-one mapping between research statements and reality.	Truth as intentional fulfilment: interpretations of the research object match the lived experience of object.
<b>Validity</b>	Certainty: data truly measures reality.	Defensible knowledge claims.
<b>Reliability</b>	Replicability: research results can be reproduced.	Interpretive awareness: researchers recognise and address the implications of their subjectivity.

Source: Adapted from Weber (2004: iv)

#### 4.2.1 Ontological Position

Ontology deals with the nature of reality (De Gialdino 2009:9). This means that researchers question the fundamental nature of existence (Christou, Valachis & Anastasiadou, 2008:13). It also implies that a researcher identifies and forms a relationship with the phenomenon he is studying. For example, the researcher needs to take a stance if the reality he is studying is independent of his thought, or whether he takes an active part in constructing reality. According to Snape and Spencer (2003:20) within social research, key ontological questions concern whether or not social reality exists independently of human conceptions and interpretations; whether there is a common, shared, social reality or just multiple context-specific realities; and whether or not social behaviour is governed by 'laws' that can be seen as immutable or generalisable.

This implies that we may be living in a society that constantly influences and directs our thoughts. According to Niehaves, Bernd and Stahl (2006:3), through their subjective understanding, individuals can attribute different meanings to the same situation, and conversely, different reactions result out of similarly expressed views, which in turn, lead to a

state of constant revision. From an ontological perspective, the researcher was able to explore the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. Immigrant children were able to narrate their life stories about their experiences in South African schools.

#### **4.2.2 Epistemological Position**

Ontology is about the nature of a phenomenon while epistemology is about how we obtain knowledge about a phenomenon which stems from a researcher's distinct epistemological position about the view of the world (Allen & Varga, 2007:7; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011:7). According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006:6), epistemology specifies the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what we know. Considering the above, Denzin and Lincoln (2011:97) posit that, in a constructivist paradigm, epistemology is subjective, since both the researcher and the respondents are engaged in jointly creating understanding. The constructivist paradigm was used in this study as it took into consideration immigrant children's subjective gendered experiences. Rich, in-depth data were collected using the constructivist approach which allowed immigrant learners to narrate their daily life experiences in schools.

#### **4.2.3 Axiological Position**

Axiology is derived from two Greek words, *axies* and *logos*. *Axies* means "worth", or value, while *logos* refers to "logic" or "theory". Put together, they have the notion of theory of values (Patterson & Williams, 1998:279). Axiology addresses the fundamental question of what is "good" or "bad" or what is desirable or worthwhile which means that it is the study of values.

In research, axiology is concerned with the impact of the researcher's own values on all phases of the research. Furthermore, axiology refers to the aims of the research (Deane, 2018: 3). It answers the question, 'What do researchers' value in research'? What is the purpose of research? Research, therefore, is value-bound; as such, the researcher becomes part of what is being researched, and may not be separate from it. This means that the role of the researcher is an important component and is subjective since he/she actively participates in the study. As result, researcher bias in all phases of research may occur and affect the quality of the findings.

In this study, to eliminate and reduce bias, the researcher had a lengthy stay at the research site before the interviews and observation commenced. The researcher was aware that his own values may negatively impact data collection, interpretation, and analysis. As a result, the

researcher was impartial, curious, caring, and diligent during data collection, interpretation and analysis.

#### **4.2.4 Methodology**

Methodology is a systematic, theoretical approach that is used to produce data. Schwardt (2007:195) defines research methodology as a theory of how an inquiry should proceed. Research methodology is used as an approach to examine the assumptions, principles, and procedures of an inquiry. It is concerned with the discussion of how a piece of research should be undertaken. In this study, the qualitative research methodology was employed to explore the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. Qualitative research methodology involves making sense of immigrant children's gendered experiences by interacting with them and listening carefully to their life stories (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:274). The following section discusses the research paradigm used in the study.

### **4.3 RESEARCH PARADIGMS**

In principle, a research paradigm can be defined as a basic set of assumptions that guide their [researchers'] inquiries (Creswell, 2010:45). This may imply that paradigms are sets of beliefs, values and assumptions held by a researcher in the pursuit of reality. The ontological and epistemological are the researchers' lenses, that is, the researchers' world view that is linked to two often opposing approaches of positivism and constructivism. Constructivism is often combined with interpretivism (Collins, 2010:5). In this study, the term constructivism would be used more often than the term interpretivism. It is common in research to view the world in different angles and hence none of these approaches is greater than the other. This study will use the constructivism approach to explore the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. However, for the purpose of comparison the researcher will first distinguish between positivism and constructivism approaches.

#### **4.3.1 Positivism**

The positivist paradigm of reality has its roots on the philosophical ideas Auguste Comte, a French Philosopher 1798-1857. Positivism is of the view that human behaviour is understood through observation and reason and that true knowledge is obtained through the senses by means of observation and experimentation. From an ontological perspective positivist believe that reality is objective and measurable and that it is independent from the researcher. In positivism the researcher uses instruments to generate knowledge as such this knowledge is

objective and can be quantified. According to Henning et al. (2004:17) positivism is concerned with uncovering the truth and presenting it by imperial means. Positivism believes that scientific knowledge is made up of facts while ontologically reality of free from social pressures (Marsh & Furlong, 2002:1-16). When the research environment is constantly steady, and the reality is unaltered, this enables the researcher to assume an objectivist point of view. Positivism believes people are passive and that they are controlled by outside forces.

#### **4.3.2 Interpretivism/Constructivism**

While positivism believe reality is objective, constructivism is of the view that reality is subjective of the external world, that is, they assume an inter-subjective epistemology and ontological. The constructivist paradigm was used to study the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. Constructivists believe that human beings create their view of the world based on their own perceptions of it or their understanding of events around them (Creswell, 2010:45); that is, individuals create their own view of the world as they interpret it and according to how the environment affects them. This means that reality is subjective, as there are often many interpretations of the same scenario. In contrast, realism which is aligned with quantitative research views the world as being objective. Researchers who use positivism believe that reality is objective, and they try to reduce bias during research (Bryman & Bell, 2007:125).

Constructivists are of the view that the phenomenon being studied should be understood from different perspectives rather than from an objective point of view. They hold that construction of reality is based on the subjective perception of the phenomenon of the participants being studied. The researcher is therefore challenged to reflect continuously on practices he is undertaking and consciously to be aware of the challenges and problems that may occur during the study. Creswell (2010:45) describes the constructivist approach as “social constructivism”. The basic tenet of social constructivism is that it places trust in the participants’ (immigrant children) interpretations and subjective experiences of the phenomenon being investigated.

The researcher chose to conduct the study using the constructivist paradigm because it is a pragmatic approach in that it explores a particular phenomenon (gendered experiences) of the world, and “looks at human conducts and practices” that seek to account for “lived experiences” (Van Manen, 2007:11). Each “lived gendered experience” is individually constructed, resulting in multiple perceptions. Individual immigrant children create these multiple realities in their social environment, according to their social context. Individual

immigrant children create structures through gendered experiences and observations, their mental processes being “significantly” informed by influences from the family, school, community, and their peers (Talja, Tuominen & Savolainen, 2005:79). The gendered experiences being constructed by immigrant children are a product of a local context, and they change continuously as children adapt to their new environments in a new society.

This study uses the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm. Table 4.2 shows the features of interpretivism/constructivism paradigm, as used in this study, categorised into the purpose of the research, the nature of reality (ontology), nature of knowledge and the relationship between the inquirer and the inquired-into (epistemology) and the methodology used (Cantrell, 2001:4).

Table 4.2: Characteristics of interpretivism/constructivism

Feature	Description
Purpose of research	Understand and interpret students’ and teachers’ perspectives on the factors that could impact the successful use of e-learning and face-to-face instructional approaches in a manner that they complement each other.
Ontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are multiple realities.</li> <li>• Reality can be explored, and constructed through human interactions, and meaningful actions.</li> <li>• Discover how people make sense of their social worlds in the natural setting by means of daily routines, conversations and writings while interacting with others around them. These writings could be text and visual pictures.</li> <li>• Many social realities exist due to varying human experience, including people’s knowledge, views, interpretations, and experiences.</li> </ul>
Epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events are understood through the mental processes of interpretation that is influenced by interaction with social contexts.</li> <li>• Those active in the research process socially construct knowledge by experiencing the real-life or natural settings.</li> <li>• Inquirer and the inquired-into are interlocked in an interactive process of talking and listening, reading, and writing.</li> <li>• More personal, interactive mode of data collection.</li> </ul>
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processes of data collected by text messages, interviews, and reflective sessions.</li> <li>• Research is a product of the values of the researcher.</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from (Cantrell, 2001:4).

Researchers who choose to use constructivism often use the case study and narrative inquiry research design. The following section discusses the research designs used during the study to explore gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools.

## **4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design is the general approach that a researcher selects to assimilate the diverse mechanisms of the study in a rational manner. It enables the researcher to safeguard the research problem and contains an outline of measurement instruments and the data analysis. It provides the overall structure for the procedures that need to be followed, the data that is collected, and the data analysis conducted by the researcher (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:2). A research design deals with a “logical problem”, not a “logistical problem” (Babbie & Mouton, 2005: 1; Yin, 2003:29). In research, matters of methods of collection, sampling and formulation of questions play a significant role in the evidence that needs to be gathered.

Researchers can draw on various research designs when they conduct a study. These include surveys, experiments, case studies, programme evaluations, ethnographic studies, and narrative inquiries. The researcher used the case study and narrative inquiry research design to investigate the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools.

### **4.4.1 Case Study Design**

There are many methods that are used to carry out research, and the case study method is one commonly used in research, particularly in education. This is because the case study is appropriate in investigating real-life situations. The case study was used to research the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools because of its uniqueness in allowing researchers to understand the post-immigrant experiences of immigrant children in host countries.

A case study is a qualitative research method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in studies in which evidence from multiple sources is used (Yin, 2009:16). Bromley (1990:302) describes a case study as a “systematic inquiry into an event or set of related events which aims to describe and explain experiences” of immigrant children in school. Its major tenets are that it involves multiple sources and techniques in the data-gathering process (Soy, 2015:3), with the researcher making the decisions regarding which methods of gathering data they will use well in advance. The most common research tools used in case study research to collect data include participants’ observations, documentary and archival records, interviews, direct observation, and physical artefacts (Yin, 2009:3). In

investigating the gendered experiences of immigrant children in schools, the researcher used in-depth interviews, direct observations, and field notes.

The use of many research tools for data collection means that a large amount of data is gathered, and this may imply that, administratively, the researchers have a lot of information that could lead to their being distracted from the original research purpose. Thus, critics of the case study design believe that collecting too much data makes data collection difficult, and produces massive amounts of documents (Yin, 2009:16). The assumption is that if data is too extensive, the probability exists that important information may be omitted or some stories may be given more attention than others (Hodgkinson & Hog, 2006:21). The use of small samples of participants in a case study is usually seen as a disadvantage, since its critics consider small numbers to increase the difficulty of generalising findings and maintaining reliability.

The drawback of a case study is its inability to provide a general conclusion, especially when events are rare. Yin (2009:17) proposes that triangulation can help to improve validity of the process. However, other researchers dismiss case study research, stating that it is only useful as an exploratory tool (Zainal, 2007:1). However, despite these drawbacks, the case study research method remains relevant in investigating the lived experiences of immigrant learners in South African schools.

#### **4.4.2 Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research method that is built on the belief that people acquire understanding of and provide meanings through the narration of their stories (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2013:11). A narrative inquiry was appropriate for this study because it offered a unique chance to understand the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools.

People always have something to say everyday about their lives, and these experiences are expressed through stories. These stories are how a person interprets and understands their world, and the way in which their experiences and behaviour are given meaning. Viewed as such, narrative inquiry is the study of experiences as a story, and a way of thinking about experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006:375). To use narrative inquiry is to adopt a view of experience as a phenomenon under study (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006:375). According to Smith and Sparkes (2016:17), human beings are basically story-telling creatures. We understand our lives in narrative form, and we create stories “to make sense, to make meaning,

to find direction” in our lives. Individuals live out their storied lives, they tell stories of their experiences, and they modify them by retelling and reliving them to understand their life experiences (Smith, B., 2010:87).

The narratives of people are social capital that is moulded, swayed, and affected by a broad spectrum of variables. According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005:585), this process adds a high degree of richness and depth to a person’s life. The authors further suggest that in reconstructing a narrative, there is a social and interpersonal aspect to identity and self-construct that happens throughout the reconstruction process. Thus, a narrative allows participants to “cough out” their experiences, so that they make sense of and meaning of the world they live in (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005:585).

The researcher’s position in a narrative inquiry becomes pivotal because they occupy an important central role during the research. The researcher positions himself with the concept of I-positioning or self-positioning according to the Dialogical Self-Theory (Oleś & Hermans, 2008:185). The Dialogical Self-Theory concedes that throughout the duration of descriptions, the researcher is not just an unreceptive listener, but also rather someone who cooperates with those being interviewed. Both the researcher and participants reconstruct their stories in place and time while integrating locations in the social world into the narrative, including the social world of the interview (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:5). This implies that in a narrative inquiry, qualitative researchers cannot remove themselves from the research procedure.

The researcher must find the means to inquire into the participants’ experiences, their own experiences, and the reconstructed experiences that develop throughout the relational inquiry process (Clandinin, 2006:375). In a narrative inquiry, the researcher vigorously participates in the research, because each stage of the procedure entails strong dialogue and compromise between the researcher and the participants. This means that the experiences are taken seriously and given recognition and are explored further to present the experiences as the participants have expressed them.

The interaction between the researcher and participants is the story of two trajectory projections: the development of ontological and epistemological accounts. Holloway and Freshwater (2007:53) describe two levels of stories: the original participant’s story and the researcher’s story, emphasising that the researcher’s narratives must be faithful to the participants’ account, but also transcend it. The ontological story is the original story told by the participant, while the epistemological story is the secondary story told by the researcher,



but with the participant's input. Ontological narratives set the landscape and the epistemological problems problematise and theorise (Stalker, 2009:230). According to Stalker (2009:230), the ontological narratives are stories in which the research participants come to understand and articulate their social reality through narratives of "events, experiences, and in general, life histories". Somer (1994:10) posits that ontological narratives "endows the previously marginalised with a powerful new sense of subjectivity, social identity are constituted by the intricate weaving of history, narrative, social knowledge, rationality, as well as institutional and cultural practices".

During a narrative inquiry, the researcher, rather than the participants, is the focal point. Stalker (2009:224) refers to this as the "epistemological narrative". In this narrative, the researcher begins to articulate the temporal, spatial, social, cultural, and economic connections between the participants' stories and the social diminutions of daily life. This means that at this stage, the researcher blends the ontological narrative together with the theoretical context, to form a new conceptual narrative that assists us to acknowledge the connections of people's stories within a given environment. These stories are collected using various data collection techniques or methods. The following section discusses the various data collection techniques or methods used to gather data for this research study.

#### **4.5 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH**

The researcher used a qualitative research methodology because it highlighted the "hidden" gendered experiences of immigrant children (Stead, Perry, Munka, Bonnett, Shiban & Care, 2011:105) in South African schools and raised awareness about the phenomenon being studied. The use of qualitative research enabled the researcher to collect a variety of in-depth and hidden information that lay behind a person's surface behaviour, including the expectations, beliefs, and intentions that determine their behaviour (Kabir, 2016:201). Utilising qualitative research methods enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth picture of the gendered perceptions and experiences of immigrant children in schools and the aspects that promote their post-migration gendered perceptions within their new environments.

Qualitative research allows the procedures of data collection to be undertaken in a natural location. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008:4), qualitative research is "a situated activity" that locates the researcher in a natural setting. Since the study focused on the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools, the researcher interacted with children using the qualitative techniques of in-depth interviews and observations to capture the

lived experiences of the participants. This implies that the qualitative approach is flexible and allows for the use of data collection methods, such as semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and documentary analysis (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2015:174), which are likely to elicit participants' lived experiences. It can be inferred that qualitative research emphasises understanding a problem from the point of view of people's lived experiences to discover how they interpret things, events, or processes (Englander, 2012:13).

The role of the researcher is an important component in qualitative research. Thanh and Thanh (2015:26) posit that in a qualitative approach, the researcher is part of the investigation via their observation and in-depth interviewing. However, they argue that researchers should also be removed from the research situation to reconsider the meanings of the experiences. Furthermore, Weber (2004:235) points out that in quantitative research, researchers and what is being researched are viewed as separate, while in qualitative research, knowledge of the world is the result of an internal process on the part of the researcher making sense of the world.

Johnson and Christensen (2012:29) believe that qualitative research enables the researcher "to enter the inner world of each participant to understand his or her perspective and experiences". "Once the researcher is immersed, it permits him to understand the processes, experiences and the meanings people assign to things, events or situations" (Frost 2009:9; Getz, 2008:3). Therefore, qualitative research was appropriate for investigating the gendered experiences of immigrant children because it seeks rich description and integration as they exist and unfold in their natural settings (Gubrium & Holstein, 2011:31).

From the above discussion, it is evident that qualitative research is not just concerned with gathering information, but rather, it is a "systematic process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information (data)" in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon that we are interested in or concerned with (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:2). It enables the researcher to understand immigrant children from their own worldview. Therefore, it is a process whereby we try to understand the context in which decisions, actions, and events occur (Podhisita, 1991:11). Thus, a qualitative approach assumes that people are influenced to behave in a way, by what they see within the environment they live in. It also seeks to understand why people behave the way they do, and how this is related to the decisions they make. People attach meaning to what they see and do (Stake, 2010:11), and it is this interpretation by researchers that is crucial to understanding any social phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:2).

The choice of qualitative research also influences the selection of the research methodology, which are vital in carrying out research of this magnitude. The following section discusses the research methodology used in the study of gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools.

## **4.6 DATA GATHERING METHODS**

The following sub-section describes the data collection methods that were applied to collect data regarding immigrant children in South African schools. Qualitative data collection methods of semi-structured in-depth interviews for immigrant children and teachers, observations and field notes were used to gather data on the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. The researcher chose to use these data collection methods because they allowed a range of data to be gathered that targeted the gendered feelings and opinions of immigrant children in South African schools.

### **4.6.1 Data Collection Tools**

The semi-structured, in-depth interview method is at the centre of qualitative research methods in comparison to other data-gathering tools, such as the observation method. This is because, during the interviews, the researcher and the participants can detect non-verbal cues and form a sense of what is happening that is perhaps deeper than mere words. This becomes pivotal in research, since what a participant may say, do, or think may not be the exact thing they do in practice. Furthermore, participants do not always know what they do, because many of their behaviours are automatic or subconscious (Bryman, Becker & Sempik, 2008:261). For example, parents, teachers, and the public may not often notice that their voices soften when they talk to girls but harden when they talk to boys. Fathers specifically often raise their voices when speaking to boys.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews involve questioning participants and paying close attention to what is being said. This type of interview allows for direct, purposeful conversations, and allows the researcher to have face-to-face interaction with the participants (Cameron, Lloyd, Turner & McDonald, 2009:388). The interviews are directed towards achieving and understanding the participants' lives, experiences, and situations as expressed in their stories. Furthermore, semi-structured in-depth interviews allow the researcher to learn "how people construct their realities, how they view, define, and experience the world" (Taylor & Bogdan, 2010:23). Additionally, such interviews give the participants opportunities to talk

about issues they consider important and encourage them to share their thoughts and feelings about migration issues (East, Jackson & O'Brien, 2010:17). As such, face-to-face interviews are the most used technique for conducting a systematic inquiry, and most social researchers regard it as a "window on the world" (Bell, Waters & Ebooks Corporation, 2014:88).

The data for this study were collected from immigrant children and teachers in South African schools, using semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The use of such interviews allowed depth to be achieved, since migrant children were given the opportunity to probe and expand their responses (East, Jackson & O'Brien, 2010:17). The children participants were given the opportunity to raise their issues of concern, to ask questions, and to make submissions regarding issues that concern them. Engaging in such discussions allowed immigrant children to influence the content as well as the product of the research outputs in general. Doing research into the respondents' own environment has the benefit of creating an enabling atmosphere for the participants in which to establish control over the interview and to feel safe, and they thus share their stories and experience with confidence (Letherby, 2003:108). Allowing children to participate actively in research creates sound relationships between the researcher and participants. Rubin and Rubin (2005:11) argue that self-revelation and openness during the interview leads to the development of rapport and trust within the research relationship.

However, the semi-structured, in-depth interview is not without its shortcomings. Researchers argue that it is very subjective and risks influencing the participants (Hitchcock, Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995:23). Still others believe that its subjectivity in fact leads to its objectivity (Adolph, Hall & Kruchten, 2011:18). On the other hand, semi-structured in-depth interviews are very cumbersome, and require that the researcher pay careful attention to the information being collected and to processing that information. The researcher should establish appropriate communication channels to understand the participants, and to be sensitive to the participants' needs.

As already mentioned in the previous discussion, data was collected from immigrant children in South African schools. The interviews were recorded on an audiotape, and notes complemented these recordings.

#### **4.6.2 Teacher Interviews**

The teachers formed an integral part of this study because teachers had in-depth knowledge, not only about immigrant children's behaviours, but also about gender-related issues at school.

The purpose of this research was to investigate the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. The teachers' experiences and knowledge about immigrant children form part of the knowledge base that would provide a clear picture of things that take place in schools. Semi-structured in-depth interviews are an appropriate method of determining teachers' understanding of gendered experiences of immigrant children (Hammersley, 2012:727). In this study, the semi-structured, in-depth interviews helped to direct the interview process during the interviews, and if there were any further questions to be asked, the researcher asked probing questions. Before the interviews, the researcher asked the teachers to approve the recording of the interviews. The information obtained was then transcribed, coded, and analysed. The following sub-section will discuss how the interviews were recorded.

#### **4.6.3 Recording the Interview**

Interviews to determine the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools were recorded on an audio tape recorder. The advantage of using an audio tape recorder is that the researcher can concentrate on discussions rather than pure note-taking, thus enabling the recording to be thorough, detailed, and retrievable (Sullivan, 2010:137). The participants' quotes are representative of the views of immigrant children in South African schools. However, the researcher requested permission from the participants' parents before the interviews began.

Tape-recordings have their own drawbacks (Legard, Keegan & Ward 2003:143). They are susceptible to developing mechanical or technical problems that may interfere with the actual interview; sometimes this may lead to loss of vital information that has already been collected. It can also influence the participants by making them more guarded about what they say (and how they say it), especially when sensitive material is being discussed (Rubin & Rubin, 2005:258). Participants who are not conversant in the language being used during the interview (considering that immigrant children may not understand the national language of the host country) may feel reserved and too shy to contribute due to feeling self-conscious about their accents. To reduce the effects linked to tape recording, the researcher jotted down notes while the interviews were in progress (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:144).

#### **4.6.4 Writing Notes**

At the start of the interviews the researcher requested permission from the participants to write notes. Note-taking does not have the same problems associated with tape recording

breakdowns, because in education, using a pen and paper is very common. Most school children and adults are content to write notes, either in class for the school children, or when adults take minutes in meetings with their peers. Additionally, taking or writing down notes is cost-effective in comparison to tape recordings, which may involve buying a tape-recorder and/or paying a person to transcribe the notes that were tape-recorded (Duchscher & Morgan, 2004:153). The other merit of writing notes stems from the fact that, while taking notes, the researcher can pick up some vital points, which may help them when they summarise the report. This will also enable the researcher to follow the story closely, and thus complete the report timeously.

The challenges associated with note-writing are that the researcher may not be able to complete the notes or be on par with the speed at which the participants talk. In this case, the recorded information closes such a gap, because the researcher can always go back to what has already been recorded to obtain the information. Taking notes does not enable the researcher to capture the quotations from the participants accurately, thereby risking missing out vital information during the interview (Lempert, 2007:144). To avoid confusion during the analysis of data, the researcher used different colours to record information from the participants and used a different set of colours in the research notes. The information provided by the participants was marked in red, while the comments from the researcher are marked in green. This is easy if participants are interviewed in the language in which they are fluent. However, in the case of immigrant children, there is the likelihood that interpreters might be required during the interviews, which is a limitation encountered while studying the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools.

#### **4.6.5 Using an Interpreter**

During the interview, the researcher anticipated that the participants would understand the questions and that the researcher would be able to understand the responses. In cases where the interpreter was used, the researcher recorded the interviews and simultaneously took down some notes.

The disadvantage of using an interpreter was that some participants were concerned about confidentiality and were unwilling to talk in the presence of an interpreter. It was problematic to capture the quotes from the participants once the interpreter had completed the interview. However, the researcher was anxious about the effectiveness of the interpreter's explanation and was concerned that the interpreter might have unduly influenced the participants.

#### 4.6.6 Observations

There are two ways that researchers usually observe a phenomenon under study: these are the participants' observations and their unobstructed observations. The participant observation method is a research tool often used in ethnographic studies in sociology and anthropology. In participant observation, the researcher was submerged into and becomes a member of the group or community they are investigating. For example, to be a participant researcher, William Foote Whyte concealed and described himself as a writer when he studied an Italian American slum gang in America (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008:580).

However, in obstructive observation, the researcher and the participants do not cooperate, the researcher observes participants' behaviours and describes their actions without consulting them in any manner. This research study used the unobstructed participant observation to gather data about the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools.

Observation as a data collection method involves getting close to the participants and making them feel comfortable in your presence, so that you can observe and collect valuable information about their lives (Bernard, 2013:136). By being present in the participants' environment, the researcher has the opportunity to access the "backstage culture" of the participants, which affords the researcher a richly detailed description of events under study (De Munck & Sobo, 1998:42). It is for this reason that the researcher chose to use observation to observe the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. The researcher gathered data by observing immigrant children in their everyday lives at school.

The observation data collection method enabled the researcher to observe participants' non-verbal expression of their feelings, to determine with whom the immigrant children interact, to understand how boys and girls communicate with each other, and to check how the host country's children behave towards immigrant children (Kawulich, 2005:142). Furthermore, the researcher paid particular attention to how immigrant girls and boys are treated by different stakeholders at school, and more so in the classroom situation where gender imbalances in teachers' interaction patterns may influence differential learning outcomes (Magno & Silova, 2007:647). More specifically, the researcher observed gendered differences in homework assignments, completion and submissions, participation in class, punctuality, effort, behaviour, and teachers' verbal comments and interactions. By purposefully observing the teaching and learning behaviours in the classroom, the researcher was able to comprehend the context of how the schools operated. On the other hand, the researcher was able to identify and see things

that were beyond the conscious minds of the teacher and staff at the schools. By watching children in different instructional practices, the researcher was able to explore how immigrant students are treated, how they interpret and make sense of subjects, where they stumbled, and what they did when they did not understand the material, and so on (Bernard, 2013:492).

During the observations, the researcher constantly made field notes linked to the semi-structured, in-depth interview results. According to David and Sutton (2004:151), observational research produces a large amount of comprehensive description, which enhances the researcher's acquisition of in-depth knowledge regarding the participants' attitudes and behaviour and how gender influences children's actions. The use of semi-structured, in-depth interviews, observations, and documents assisted in capturing wide-ranging information of what transpired at school in general, and inside the classroom. In addition, the varying methodological techniques employed helped to triangulate data from interviews and documents, and assisted in providing a fuller picture of how gender influences the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools (Zellermayer & Tabak, 2007:33). Furthermore, De Walt and De Walt (2002:10) believe that by varying the data collection methods, the validity of the study is increased, as the researcher might have a better understanding of the context of the phenomenon under study. Validity is strengthened by the additional use of a range of strategies (De Walt & De Walt, 2002:10).

Observations also have drawbacks. The participants who are observed may be influenced by the researcher's presence, and as such they may "act out" at first. When they are aware that they are being observed, immigrant children may exhibit behaviours that they think the researcher wants to observe. However, many researchers reject this argument. For example, Whyte, in observing an Italian American slum gang, felt that he was eventually able to blend into their environment so that social life carried on as normal around him (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008:580). What this means is that, while in the initial stages of the observation there is a likelihood that participants might be nervous because of the presence of the researcher, consistent visits allay the children's concerns, and they begin to accept the observer's presence. Observations are applied in conjunction with in-depth interviews. The section below discusses how participants for the study were chosen.

#### **4.7 POPULATION**

The participants in this study were immigrant learners attending South African primary schools. The selection of immigrant learners was achieved through three contacts: (a) the



researcher; (b) the learners' home language teachers; and (c) the participants (children and parents).

The research sites for this study were three primary schools in the Johannesburg East District and all are within a radius of 10 kilometres of each other. The schools were selected because they had the same variables (immigrant children) being researched, except that they differed in their physical structures and the school ethos/culture. The population of these schools is exclusively black learners since they are all located in exclusively black townships.

#### **4.7.1 Sampling and Recruitment of Learners**

The process of participant selection involved several stages that ultimately lead to the final choice of who would participate in the investigation. In qualitative research, the selection of participants is determined by several considerations, chief among them being the research aims and the nature of research being conducted. The sample size in qualitative research is an intrinsic matter that is influenced by the objectives of the research, time, and availability of appropriate resources (Patton, 2002:184). The major determinant that leads to the choice of the sampling method was the status of the participants, all of whom were foreign nationals, and as such, a special sampling procedure had to be followed, namely snowball sampling.

Eighteen participants (9 girls and 9 boys) from three primary schools in the Johannesburg East District were selected to participate in the investigation of the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African, all of whom were chosen using the snowball sampling technique. It must be emphasised at this time that the number of the actual participants was determined during the interview processes, as some participants decided to exit for various reasons.

Despite this limitation, the snowball sampling technique was an appropriate tool to identify and locate immigrant children in South African primary schools. Snowball sampling is an appropriate sampling method that can be used to "gain entry to and recruit dispersed and difficult to locate population sub-groups" (Shaghghi, Bhopal & Sheikh, 2011:86), because they are often isolated and do not want to be identified, and as such they are hard to find. Immigrant children in schools were chosen through recommendations or links made with other immigrant families, children, and/or language teachers. The major advantage of snowball sampling is that it is cost-effective in comparison to other sampling methods.

There were three contacts that the researcher used within the schools to identify the participants using snowball sampling. According to Kirchherr and Charles (2018:1) and Schmalzbauer (2004:1317), the use of more than one contact to identify potential participants is to minimise bias. This also increased the probability of selecting immigrant children of different nationalities and cultural and ethnic backgrounds to participate in the investigations. A mixture of participants increases the potential of producing balanced results and may also be good for comparison purposes.

The three initial contacts the researcher identified that assisted in selecting participants were the researcher, teachers who teach native/home languages, and immigrant parents and children. Since the researcher has taught in two of the three primary schools, it was appropriate for him to identify participants who met the benchmarks of the investigations. The participants who were selected were then notified and requested to participate in the investigation. Enlisting participants that the researcher was familiar with had the advantage of a higher participation rate and resulted in a very low dropout.

The second group of contacts the researcher identified were the immigrant children nine (9) girls and nine (9) boys learning in the three primary schools. Immigrant children know each other's backgrounds and ethnic identities and they acted as a source of information. The researcher asked immigrant children to identify some of their colleagues, and to compile a list that the researcher used for selecting participants. To determine whether those selected were suitable participants, the researcher designed a selection form/survey that was given to the children, and they were asked to fill in the particular information that helped the researcher to identify possible participants.

Finally, contacts were drawn mainly from teachers who taught vernacular/home languages. The home language teachers had a wealth of information pertaining to who came from where and who spoke certain languages in their classrooms. Some immigrant children struggled to learn the vernacular/local language, and thus, teachers could easily identify these children. It is for this reason that the home language teachers were asked to help identify immigrant children within their classrooms. The other advantage of using home language teachers to identify immigrant children stems from the fact that not only can they select these pupils but they also have some knowledge as to what nationality the children are, which was vital for this research. Participants were selected from different nationalities.

#### **4.7.2 Selection of Teachers**

Nine teachers, three from each primary school in the Johannesburg East District were selected to participate in the study. Six of these teachers were female while three teachers were male; these numbers are representative of the ratio of female and male deployment of teachers in government schools. The teachers who were going to participate were selected with the help of principals and the School Management Team (SMT) from the three schools participating in the study. However, it was appropriate that teachers who teach home languages at intermediate and senior level were responsible for selecting the immigrants in their classes. This is because the teachers of the vernacular, rather than teachers who teach general languages, had knowledge of all the children's background information. Children were selected according to the three home languages taught in the intermediate and senior phases, to enable the children to consolidate or maintain peer relationships they had established at the beginning of the year. In total, nine teachers were selected to participate in the study, three from each school. The researcher then arranged to meet the participants and consent forms were provided and signed.

#### **4.8 PILOT TESTING**

Pilot testing means discovering whether the research's semi-structured, in-depth interview guide and observation sheets would be functional in a practical situation, by applying them to a small group of individuals. The reason therefore is to ensure that those participants who have been selected for the pilot project comprehend the questions without experiencing any difficulties. This allows the researcher to diagnose problems well in advance and to measure the duration of the interview. The researcher can adjust research tools if necessary. It also allows the researcher to engage with his team and to test out devices that were to be used during interviews, that is, training the team on how to operate devices that would be used. Thus, during pilot testing, the researcher tested the research instruments and trained the team that would assist to collect data during the field trips. Pilot testing is a trustworthy building measure and a learning curve before the actual interview is conducted (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:332).

After conducting pilot testing, the researcher was able to obtain feedback about the research instrument by asking individual participants to repeat some of the questions they had been asked, and he encouraged them to be as forthcoming with information as possible. The information the researcher obtained during pilot testing was used to correct the data and instruments, and to re-test the questions again to reduce mistakes. A pilot study was critical since it gave the researcher the opportunity to test and refine the proposed research methods,

the criteria for recruiting participants and the procedures for both data generation and analysis (Kim, 2010:191; Murray, 2009:49). Once the pilot testing had been conducted and the research tool modified, the next stage was data processing.

The following section discusses the levels of data collection that were appropriate to begin the process of data analysis leading to the completion of the research.

#### **4.9 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

The selection of the site and the participants from whom to collect appropriate and relevant data was determined by the researcher's planning undertaken before he gathered the data. In this case, the researcher analysed the research problems and questions to determine who would participate in the research.

For this research, the researcher identified three primary schools in the Kaalfontein, Midrand area where the research was conducted. The sites were specifically chosen because all the primary schools are situated in areas where many immigrant families live. In these primary schools and the surrounding areas, there are many immigrant children attending government-run schools. In collecting data, the researcher needed to select appropriate research sites and participants (Berg & Lune, 2011:47), in order for him to strike a rich vein of data that would bring out the best of the participants' gendered experiences. The primary schools the researcher chose met all of the data collection criteria for selecting immigrant children as participants, to obtain information from them, to influence the kind of information to be gathered, to construct research tools, and to manage the procedure of information being collected in principled ways (Creswell, 2012:205).

Once the researcher had identified the research sites, the next phase was to obtain permission to conduct the research at the selected primary schools. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:322) observe that obtaining permission may be a complicated process because it "takes considerable time" if you are a complete stranger to the site, "unless you are helped by someone". To avoid delays, the researcher applied for permission to conduct the research. Firstly, permission was sought from the UNISA College of Education's Ethics Committee, who granted the researcher an ethical clearance certificate (Appendix A). Secondly, the researcher applied for permission from the Provincial Gauteng Department of Education to conduct research at the three primary schools since they have jurisdiction over these schools (Appendix B). Once permission to conduct the research was approved by the Gauteng Education Department, the researcher

presented the district head office senior managers concerned with a copy of the letter advising that the Gauteng Department of Education had granted permission for the researcher to conduct the research study. The negotiation to access the research sites and meet with the participants is grounded on the assumption of creating social contacts with authorities (Wanat, 2008:92).

Once the researcher received the letter granting permission to conduct research in the approved district, the researcher forwarded the letter to the school principals and the chairperson of the schools' governing bodies (SGBs). At the same time, the researcher applied for permission to conduct research at the school through the principals and the SGBs. Once the school principals and the SGBs gave the researcher permission to conduct the research at the school, the researcher made an appointment to visit the schools. This phase was characterised by the first school visit in the field, during which the researcher established rapport, trust, and reciprocal relations with the individuals and groups to be observed (Shenton & Hayter, 2004:223). This was a very important phase because it involved recruitment of personnel that would help during the data collection; it helped the researcher to get a feel of the site, to study the site, and to meet different personalities, as well as to select participants.

As pointed out above, data was collected from immigrant children and additional information was solicited from teachers from different primary schools. This is encouraged by Berg and Lune (2011:47) who regard the choosing of an appropriate site and obtaining crucial information from selected participants as vital aspects of research. Identifying participants can be regarded as the initial step in research, including locating a research site, and gaining permission to use the site, and/or network with persons (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:322). This phase was followed by crafting the research tools and pilot testing. The research tools were tested in a pilot school to gauge their effectiveness, to establish that they were correctly structured and to ascertain whether the questions were too ambiguous.

#### **4.9.1 Data Processing**

The information is rearranged, organised, and interpreted in a process often referred to as data analysis. During data analysis, information that has been collected is indexed, coded, sorted, retrieved, and or manipulated (Miles & Huberman, 1994:10), and organised, coded, and categorised (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:360). Using other methods, raw data can also undergo a cumulative procedure of analysis and interpretation for the purpose of reducing it to levels of understanding and meaning (Slone, 2009:488). Researchers adopt different styles of data analysis when analysing information and this may be influenced by the amount of data

they have collected, as well as the objectives of the research and the research questions. In this study, the qualitative content analytical style or technique was used to analyse data that were collected from the semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentary evidence.

Two contrasting definitions of qualitative content analysis are given below. Firstly, qualitative content analysis is a “research method for the subjective interpretation of content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes and patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1218). Secondly, qualitative content analysis is a controlled analysis of empirically collected text within the context of communication, following content analytical rules and step-by-step models, without any quantification (Mayring, 2014:2). In the first definition, the word “subjective” implies that content analysis may be used as a research tool to analyse information that has been gathered through a qualitative research methodology. In the second definition, the term “empirical” may suggest that content analysis is also used to analyse data in quantitative research methods. Therefore, there is an inference that qualitative content analysis uses both subjective and empirical tools to analyse data that have been collected during investigations.

It is appropriate at this stage, to make a brief comparison between qualitative content analysis and quantitative content analysis to develop a deeper perspective on the two methods. Qualitative content analysis originated from anthropology, sociology, and psychology to establish the significance of physical messages. Quantitative content analysis is used in communication as a tool to count manifested textual elements (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009:308). Furthermore, quantitative content analysis applies a deductive approach to answer questions that emanate from a theory or from past research and selects data through random sampling techniques. Qualitative content analysis uses an inductive approach and chooses data by means of purposeful sampling that is linked to the research questions. The two methods also differ regarding outputs. Quantitative content analysis uses statistical figures while qualitative content analysis produces descriptions of participants’ feelings, reflecting how they interpret their environments (Berg, 2004:11). However, while the two methods appear to be different, they are often used interchangeably by researchers. According to Abrahamson (1984:286), qualitative analysis deals with forms and antecedent-consequent patterns of form, while quantitative analysis deals with the duration and frequency of forms.

The aim of qualitative content analysis is to reduce or condense raw data by grouping similar themes or patterns into categories. Qualitative content analysis is a systematic process of

coding, categorising, and interpreting data to provide an explanation of the participants' experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:360). To identify themes or patterns, the researcher listened to participants' responses that were generated from the semi-structured interviews, field notes, and observations. The researcher also relied on the interview guide notes and other descriptions that were written during the field trip visits he undertook with the participants. The other source of information came from digital recordings, such as the audio recordings, video clips and documentary information that were obtained during the interviews and interactions with the participants. This information was then transcribed into text. Transcription requires converting the participants' recorded responses into textual data (Creswell, 2012:239). To transcribe the information into text, the researcher listened to audio recordings and video footage, and wrote the information on paper as text. According to Check and Schutt (2012:304), documentation and the organisation of data is vital since it offers the researcher a frame on which to map out the analytical process.

The process of transcription and data analysis begins simultaneously with data collection. During data collection, the researcher wrote observation and interview notes that would help identify possible themes and interpretations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:360). Writing these summaries helped to categorise the information logically. It also helped to identify recurring ideas that could be converted into themes. Themes are easily identifiable when data are systematically arranged and organised. Qualitative content analysis helps condense raw data into themes through inductive reasoning. However, Patton (2002:84) argues that qualitative content analysis does not need to exclude deductive reasoning. Creating concepts or discovering a theory is also vital for qualitative research, particularly at the early stages of data analysis (Berg, 2001:2).

Once themes/patterns were identified, they were placed into categories and were grouped according to their similarities or dissimilarities and read for coding. Patton (2002:405) considers coding to be the framework for organising collected data, and a platform for the interpretation of data. Coding begins by identifying text or information and applying labels to show that they resemble thematic ideas or patterns (Babbie, 2010:400). Coding can take many approaches. During coding, data is divided into chunks, which are minute expressive words or phrases carrying an idea. Coding phrases or words needs to reflect the content of the communication accurately and precisely (Gray, 2009:508). Coding simplifies the organisation of data into meaningful categories that the researcher will use to summarise the findings (Kalof, Dan & Dietz, 2008:95). These phrases contain an idea or meaning and may be of any size. The

use of codes is vital in research, as they help the researcher to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. Codes are an important element for data organisation and retrieval, as they also help the researcher to convert data into themes (Taylor, Sinha & Ghoshal, 2008:161). Coding also plays an important role in reducing the amount of data into meaningful chunks of information, and this contributes immensely to data interpretation.

When coding has been completed, the following step is the data interpretation. This is the stage where the researcher finds a way to create meaning by connecting themes that have been developed from codes, sub-codes, and categories into expressive information. Here themes and patterns that are similar are matched, and those that contrast are put to meaningful use and used to develop a story. During data collection and processing, matters pertaining to trustworthiness, reliability, and validity are observed, since these factors determine the study's acceptability.

#### **4.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Credibility in a qualitative study denotes the linkage between what respondents reveal or say and how the information is construed and tabulated by the researcher. To ensure that the explanation, interpretations, and descriptions of the researcher are connected to the words said by respondents, the following strategies were applied.

Firstly, the researcher used various research methods to gather data (triangulation). For example, the researcher used semi-structured in-depth interviews for learners and teachers' observations as sources of data to collect information to verify evidence. The major goal of triangulation is to circumvent the researcher's personal bias and overcome the deficiencies that are intrinsic to single-method studies, thus increasing the validity of the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:46).

Secondly, the researcher dealt with bias. To reduce researcher bias, the researcher revealed himself to the research site well in advance to gain the participants' trust. Researchers need to be trusted before they can obtain any accurate reliable or credible data (Leininger & McFarland, 2006:3). Spending considerable time in the research site before gathering information eases concerns and mistrust, and this may lead to the researcher being allowed to grow close to participants. The researcher will become sensitised to the situation, and at the same time, participants can become used to the researcher's presence (Goetz & Le Compte, 1984:37).



Thirdly, the researcher attended training. The researcher's bias may also be caused when researchers impose their own values, where they choose data selectively, and interpret data that they deem suitable for the study. The researcher needs to be mindful that bias could take place during any other stage of the research. Lincoln, Lyham and Guba (2011:14) state that researchers need to attend extensive and rigorous training as interviewers and observers before conducting research.

Fourthly, the researcher conducted himself in a transparent manner. Researchers need to be transparent about their values and belief systems that may affect the validity of the research. Reflexivity is a vital component of any study. Reflexivity is where the researcher self-discloses their assumptions, beliefs, biases, pre-understandings, and personal experiences in relation to the problem being studied (Creswell & Miller, 2002:127). Reflexivity enables the researcher to be sensitive to the participants' needs and wants, hence safeguarding the hidden stories emerging from participants.

Fifthly, the researcher recorded the interviews on an audio recorder while simultaneously taking down notes. A field diary was also used to record all the activities during the fieldwork and observations. The researcher is the key person shaping the findings of the research, which includes conflicts of interest and ethical concerns. An unethical judgement can undermine the rights of research participants through the methods used, or society at large, through the implications of the research findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:71).

#### **4.10.1 Credibility in Observations**

The data that are collected using the observation method run the risk of being affected by the observer's expectations of what they are about to discover, and this compromises and casts doubt on the quality of work that will be produced (Kawulich, 2004:83). The researcher usually places more emphasis on the explicit occurrences that they are concerned with, possibly neglecting some of the factors that arise within the environment. To decrease his bias, the researcher used a thorough, primed checklist specifying detailed behaviours to be observed, and when these behaviours took place they were noted.

#### **4.11 OVERVIEW OF QUALITATIVE CRITERIA**

Trustworthiness is the conceptual soundness against which the value of qualitative research may be evaluated (Brown et al., 2009:305). It is concerned with how valuable the findings of

the research are. The four basic tenets of trustworthiness in establishing valuable research findings are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Tracy, 2010:837).

#### **4.11.1 Credibility**

Credibility is an important element of interpretivist research and refers to internal validity. Internal validity refers to the ruling out of rival interpretations, the construct's likelihood of being real and reliable, and ensuring that the instrument measures the right content (Straub, Boudreau & Gefen, 2004:380). In order to establish credibility, the researcher must facilitate prolonged engagement with participants, use triangulation of data by using several data collection tools, and share the verbatim transcripts of the individual interviews with each participant (Carcary, 2009:11; Morrow, 2005:250). During this study, the researcher expected to collect data over a period of at least three months, which is considered sufficient time to gather the required information.

#### **4.11.2 Transferability**

Transferability corresponds with external validity and is concerned with the extent to which the study's findings can be applied to other situations (Cooney, 2010:17). Findings are externally valid when they extend to certain individuals and settings beyond those immediately studied. The researcher ensured that the appropriate measuring tools were used to measure what they intended to measure.

#### **4.11.3 Dependability**

Dependability is a qualitative trustworthiness concept that is closely linked to reliability in quantitative research (Morrow, 2005:250). Reliability implies that if the work is repeated in the same context, with the same methods, and with the same participants, similar results will be obtained (Cohen et al., 2011:278). To enhance reliability, the researcher used peer researchers, student advisers, and colleagues to examine research activities and processes (Morrow, 2005:250).

#### **4.11.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability answers the question: Can other researchers confirm the findings of the research study by presenting the same data that has been produced? Confirmability tests the research's objectivity (Brown, Richard, Stevens, Troiano & Schneider, 2002:1). The researcher took the following steps to ensure that confirmability was adhered to: triangulation, which refers to the

cross-validation among data sources; data collection strategies; time periods; and theoretical schemes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:360).

Linked to trustworthiness are the ethical considerations that the researcher must be mindful of when conducting research. The following section discusses the ethical issues that the researcher needed to consider.

#### **4.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Investigating children is a complex and delicate activity that requires special attention, since children are at a developing stage, and any action that fails to follow certain recommended guidelines could be detrimental to their development. Additionally, it may impact negatively on the data being collected, and may go against the code of ethics. In order to observe certain codes of standards, the researcher relied on UNISA's code of ethics that spells out the ethical guidelines, in Section 7 (UNISA, 2016: 32).

The ethical guidelines give direction on how researchers should conduct themselves before, during and after data collection. By following these directives, researchers ensure that participants' personal information remains anonymous and confidential during gathering and analysing data (Payne & Payne, 2004:239). In addition to these other ethical principles, the guidelines include but are not limited to privacy, approval, avoidance of harm, and termination of research. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:101) list the following as ethical standards:

- a. protection from harm, either physical or psychological; for example, participants may get the impression that they are pressurised or harassed into participating in a research study, or they might experience anxiety or be afraid of expressing their feelings in case they express sensitive information that triggers reprisals from authorities;
- b. informed consent, which means that the onus is on the researcher to give the participants as much information as possible to enable them to make appropriate decisions about whether to participate in the research the right to privacy ensures that the respondents' personal information is kept secret, with no disclosures being made; and
- c. honesty, which refers to the researcher's open and unambiguous character when conducting research.

Considering the above discussion, it is imperative to provide safety and security to immigrant children to prevent damage and to minimise risks related to the research, taking into consideration their vulnerability in a host country. Prior to the commencement of the research,

the researcher sought permission to carry out the research from the Gauteng Department of Education and the principals of the chosen schools, clearly spelling out the research purpose and objectives, including the research timeframe.

Furthermore, the researcher wrote a letter to the parents/guardians, children, and some staff members, seeking permission and spelling out the research intentions. The consent letters included a tear-off slip that served as the parents'/guardians' agreement to allow their children to participate. The letters of consent provided assurances of safety and security and were an indication that the participants volunteered to participate in the investigation without coercion. Participants who no longer wished to participate or decided to withdraw from the research process could do so without penalty. No participants were coerced or persuaded to participate in the research against their will.

To maintain anonymity of the participants' identity, the researcher used pseudonyms to conceal their identity, and to avoid exposing them to the public. All the real names were kept confidential, and the participants' dignity, privacy, and confidentiality were maintained by not disclosing their personal data to anyone (McMurray, Wayne & Scott, 2004:236). The use of pseudonyms for the participants and the sites safeguarded against the immigrant children being identified and thus protected them against harassment and intimidation.

The advances in technology imply that more technological devices are used in research than ever before. Participants' words and gestures can be captured technologically during research, and this may imply that their privacy is being compromised. For anonymity to be maintained and for it to yield maximum benefits, participants' photographs and/or images should not be included in the final report (Crow, Heath, Charles & Wiles, 2008:3). This means that anonymity triumphs when respondents and the information they have given is kept in confidence, and this is another way to ensure that the answers provided by the participants are credible.

Before and during the interviews, the researcher was open and transparent and provided detailed information about the time and site of the interviews well in advance and provided all logistical support needed. At the beginning, the researcher told the participants that the audio recorders or a video camera would be used to record the interview proceedings and assured them that all information obtained would be secured and stored in a safe place. In addition, the researcher told the participants that the recordings would be used to facilitate transcription of the information they provided for the purpose of later analysis.

#### **4.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter described the research design and methodology that guided the research study, and subsequently the range of data tools used to collect information. Sections of the research design and methodology that were discussed were the research paradigm, research designs, sample design and size, pilot study data collection, and analysis procedures, including ethical considerations. The research study explored the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. Participants were selected using snowball sampling. The snowball sampling was the preferred method of data collection because it enabled the researcher to reach out to immigrant children who were not accessible by using other methods of sampling. Information was gathered from immigrant children and their teachers through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and observations using a qualitative approach at three schools in the Johannesburg East District.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter discussed qualitative research methodology, research design, and data collection instruments used to explore the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. The chapter also detailed data processing, pilot testing, sample selection, and ethical considerations followed in the study. In this chapter, data collected using semi-structured interviews, observations and field notes are interpreted, analysed, described, and presented to explore immigrant children's gendered experiences. Data are analysed and described using content analysis where codes and themes are further adjusted to generate appropriate major concepts in line with the research questions, theoretical framework, and literature review (Creswell, 2014:196; Sandelowski, 2010:77).

The major sources of data were interviews conducted with 18 immigrant children (nine girls and nine boys) and nine teachers; observations; and field notes. Data generated from the experiences of the 18 children give some insights into the extent of their gendered experiences in schools. Before presenting an analysis of the findings, it is important to present the demographic profile of teachers and immigrant children's demographic backgrounds and their countries of origin.

#### **5.2. THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF TEACHERS AND LEARNERS**

The following sub-section will present the demographic backgrounds of teachers and learners who participated in the study.

##### **5.2.1 The Demographic Profile of Teachers**

The data gathered on teachers' profile included teachers' names (pseudonyms), gender, school, qualifications, and experience. The data analysis for teachers is presented in this chapter in section 5.5.

###### **5.2.1.1 Background information of teachers**

Data was gathered using semi-structured, in-depth interviews to solicit teachers' perceptions on immigrant children in South African schools. The background checks examined variables such as gender, qualifications, and experiences of teachers who participated in the study. The

following are the results of the background checks of the teachers from three different schools in the Johannesburg East District. To conceal the names of participants, teachers were given fictitious names.

#### 5.2.1.2 The background information of teachers in School A

Table 5.1 shows that three (3) teachers participated in school A, two (2) women and one (1) man. Two (2) teachers, one (1) woman and one (1) man, held a Bachelor of Education Honours Degree (Intermediate Phase) while one (1) woman held a Post Graduate Certificate in Education. The average years of experiences for teachers in School A was ten years.

Table 5.1 Teachers who participated in School A.

<b>Name of teacher (pseudonym)</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Years of experience</b>
Shamaite Mable	Female	B.Ed. Honours (Intermediate Phase)	12
Sibongile Khanyile	Female	PGCE	11
Tebogo Tabe	Male	B.Ed. Honours (Intermediate Phase)	10

#### 5.2.1.3 The background information of teachers in School B

Table 5.2 below indicates that two women and one man took part in the research study in School B. The two women held a Bachelor of Education Honours qualification while the male participant had an Advanced Certificate in Education. The average years of teaching experience of all the three teachers in school B was 13 years.

Table 5.2 Teachers who participated in School B

<b>Name of teacher (pseudonym)</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Years of experience</b>
Mpumelelo Moyo	Female	B. Ed Honours (Intermediate Phase)	12
Dineo Mohlale	Female	B. Ed Honours (Intermediate Phase)	13
Prosper Zuma	Male	Advanced Certificate in Education (Intermediate Phase)	14

#### 5.2.1.4 The background information of teachers in School C

Table 5.3 shows the demographic information of teachers at School C who took part during the study. There were two women and one man who participated in the study. All the teachers in School C held a B.Ed. Honours degree and their average teaching experiences was six years.

Table 5.3 Teachers who participated in School C

Name of teacher (pseudonym)	Gender	Qualification	Years of experiences
Lesedi Mokgolo	Female	B.Ed Honours (Intermediate Phase)	5
Nelisiwe Makgopa	Female	B.Ed Honours (Intermediate Phase)	4
Julias Malele	Male	B.Ed Honours (Intermediate Phase)	7

A total of nine teachers, six women and three men participated in the study. The ratio of women to men is 2:1 and this may imply that there are more female teachers than male teachers in these primary schools. All the teachers had high-level educational qualifications which may indicate that teachers are taking advantage of professional development programmes to upgrade themselves. Furthermore, this may indicate that there is high-quality delivery at school. An interesting observation is that the female teachers held a degree qualification. This is a positive development for gender parity in schools. More female teachers with higher qualifications may act as role models for girls and boys. However, fewer male teachers at primary schools could mean there are fewer role models for boys; as a result, schools may experience indiscipline from boys which may impact negatively on learning and teaching.

#### 5.2.2 Immigrant children's background by gender and country of origin

The data gathered on immigrant children's backgrounds includes their age, sex, country of origin, and present grade level. Nine (9) girls and nine (9) boys of immigrant origin were selected using the snowball sampling techniques from three primary schools in the Johannesburg East District. The actual names of participants are not mentioned to preserve their privacy and confidentiality (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:356).

#### 5.2.2 Demographic Background Data of Immigrant Children by Gender

Data were gathered using semi-structured in-depth interviews, observations, and field notes, and it was examined to define immigrant children in terms of variables such as sex, age, grade, and country of origin. The results are presented in the following sections.



#### 5.2.2.1 The background information of immigrant children

Table 5.4 indicates the number of immigrant children who participated in the study by gender. Altogether, 18 immigrant children participated in the study and there was gender equity in the selection participants, that is, nine girls and nine boys.

Table 5.4: Immigrant children by gender

Gender	Number
Girls	9
Boys	9
Total	18

The children were purposively chosen to participate in the study from three primary schools in the Johannesburg East District. Semi-structured interviews, observations and field notes were used to gather data over a period of six weeks at the schools focusing specifically on immigrant children's gendered experiences.

#### 5.2.2.2 Immigrant children by age range

As depicted in Table 5.5, the age of immigrant children who participated in the research ranged from 12 to 13 years meaning that they were all within the primary school age cohort. In South Africa, the compulsory primary school-going age is 6-15 years, though in some cases children may attend primary school up to the age of 17 years (Statistics South Africa, 2013: 13).

Table 5.5: Distribution of immigrant children's age range

Age	Number
11-12	15
13-14	3

#### 5.2.2.3 Composition of immigrant children by gender and grade

As depicted in Table 5.6, data collected was based on gender and grade level of immigrant children who participated in the study.

Table 5.6: Gender and grade levels of immigrant children who participated in the study

Grade	Number of Girls	Number of Boys	Total
Intersen			
6	2	1	3
7	7	8	15
Sub-totals	9	9	18

Key: Intersen –Intermediate and senior phase

#### 5.2.2.4 Distribution of immigrant children by country of origin and gender

Table 5.7 represents the background profiles of immigrant children by country of origin and gender.

Table 5.7: Immigrant children by country of origin and gender

Country of origin	Number of interviewed children by country		Subtotal
	Girls	Boys	
Botswana	-	1	1
Lesotho	2	1	3
Mozambique	3	4	7
Rwanda	1	-	1
Swaziland	1	1	2
Zimbabwe	2	2	4
Grand Total	9	9	18

The largest number of immigrant children who were interviewed came from Mozambique with three girls and four, respectively. Zimbabwe had the second highest number of immigrant children with two girls and two boys, while two girls and one boy represented Lesotho. There were two Swazi immigrant children, one girl and one boy. One boy represented Botswana and one girl represented Rwanda. The figures in Table 5.7 are in line with the official data that indicate that most immigrant children in South African schools come from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia and Lesotho, with others coming from as far afield as Nigeria, DRC and Ghana (Stats SA, 2013:54). Currently, South Africa has no credible statistics of documented, unaccompanied, and separated migrant children living in the country (Times Live, 2017:1). Thus, the number of immigrant children who live in South Africa remains unknown to authorities and schools are thus faced with numerous resource challenges to accommodate large numbers of immigrants who enrol in schools.

The following sections present the findings related to immigrant children's gendered experiences in South African schools.

### **5.3 PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS**

The first major theme that emerged from data was the gendered influence of the immigrant family, which in turn generated these sub-themes: gendered intellectual inspiration of children and instituting gendered conversations with children regarding educational matters. To illuminate the discussion, the narratives from the immigrant children are presented verbatim.

#### **5.3.1 The Family's Influence on Immigrant Children's Intellectual Inspirations**

The family's influence on the immigrant child's inspirations was the first sub-theme related to providing gendered intellectual inspirations to immigrant children. The family is often regarded as the first and most important agent of gender socialisation. The influence of the family on the child's schooling cannot be overemphasised because it is often argued that parental involvement is associated with school achievement. The way immigrant families socialise their children has a significant influence on their children's schooling. While immigrant parents may try to ensure that they provide equal opportunities for their children, according to the responses received in this study, some important gender gaps still exist in terms of how immigrant parents intellectually inspire their children.

The findings of this study confirm that girls and boys receive different types of intellectual motivation and treatment from their parents regarding their schooling. This was confirmed by both immigrant boys and girls in the study, with immigrant girls appearing to receive less attention from their fathers than their male counterparts. Immigrant children were aware of the influence of their families' encouragement on their educational outcomes as seen in the excerpt below.

*When I started school here in South Africa, my father encouraged me to take Sepedi as a home language. I did not know a single word in Sepedi. However, because my father could speak and write the language, he insisted that I take Sepedi as a second additional language despite my mother's protest. He taught me how to read and write Sepedi all the time he was home. He even came to request Sepedi reading books from my teacher. Now I am the best in Sepedi in the class (Immigrant Girl 1, School A).*

For some of these children, the moral support and motivation that they receive from their parents is critical, as it may determine the child's schooling and their employment chances later in life. This finding regarding family influence confirms the findings of a study conducted by the Verhallen and Bus (2010:54) in Britain, which found that parental influence in terms of reading stories aloud to their children and meeting with teachers has a bigger impact on immigrant children's educational goals than either the efforts extended by teachers or the immigrant children themselves. In the same vein, the gender development theory postulates that the family has an influential role in children's educational success (Miller, 2016:4). For example, Tiedemann (2000:144) found that mothers with kindergarten children expected their daughters to do well in reading and their sons to do well in maths. This was confirmed by the immigrant boys who participated in the study as follows.

*My father helps me a lot in mathematics because I want to be an engineer. He even sends me to extra lessons, so I can improve my maths. Every time my father visits school, the first exercise book he opens when he is in my class is for mathematics. He even sanctions me if my teacher reports me to him. You know, sometimes I do not hand over my homework on time, something like that, and the teacher reports me to dad. He would be mad at me, mad, and he shouts at me (Immigrant Boy 1, School C).*

This male participant indicated that he was the only one who was sent for extra lessons for mathematics, although he had a younger sister. The reasons given as to why his sister did not attend extra mathematics lessons were that she was still in a lower grade and that the family could not afford to pay for extra lessons for both. The researcher could only speculate that this was because the family still harboured the “*male child preference syndrome*” and that they embraced the traditional belief that boys outperform girls in mathematics. From the way this male participant expressed himself, it was clear that he was happy with the arrangement.

The traditional belief that boys are better at mathematics than girls is confirmed in Diekman, Brown, Johnston and Clark's (2010:1051) study, which found that when boys and girls were equated for mathematical ability, mothers and fathers believed that their daughters were less talented than their sons. Diekman et al. (2010:1051) found similar results confirming that the family exerts a strong influence on their sons to perform well in mathematics, often at the expense of their daughters, and this may cause a lack of confidence in their daughters, which may then lead to lowered mathematics ability. Another reason could be that the son performed

poorly in mathematics, while the daughter showed a superior natural aptitude for mathematics, or that the daughter would be sent to lessons at a particular age, as mentioned by the son during the interviews.

The behaviour of this boy's family is not exceptional, as Tenenbaum and Leaper (2003:83) also stated that one of the reasons why families are more likely to engage in gender stereotyping of their children is less time spent rearing their children since they spend less time together. On the other hand, the GST postulates that fathers demonstrate greater concern with gender disconformities in their sons, and selectively reinforce behaviours that are deemed appropriate when punishing cross-gender-typed behaviours (Heilbrun, Wydra & Friedberg, 1989:293). Immigrant Boy 1, School C described how his father shouted at him to reinforce the behaviour that he deemed appropriate whenever the teacher reported him for failing to submit his schoolwork.

According to Immigrant Boy 1, School C, another reason why his younger sister was not enrolled for extra mathematics lessons was lack of funds. This implies that an immigrant family's socioeconomic status determines how it practises gender socialisation. The socioeconomic status of immigrant families perpetuates gender imbalances within families. Some immigrant families are poor and vulnerable, and most likely, a family with a low socioeconomic status would socialise their children according to the traditional beliefs practised in their country of origin. One could argue that the influence of the immigrant family on their children's education is determined by "the type, size, [and] structure of these families" (Wangui, 2012:60). This includes the family's socioeconomic status and demographics.

### **5.3.2 The Role of the Family in instituting Conversations with Children on Schooling**

It is important to maintain cordial relationships within families because when a family has positive relationships, this fosters a positive self-esteem in children as well as their beliefs and attitudes towards education. Most of the immigrant children in the study admitted that they discussed school matters with one or both of their parents; however, they stated that they preferred to talk to parents of the same sex. By implication, immigrant girls tend to discuss their concerns and challenges with their mothers more often than with their fathers, and vice versa. Most of the interviewed immigrant children stated that they preferred to talk to parents of the same sex because, as Immigrant Girl 2, School B, put it:

*It is easy to talk to my mother about schoolwork and other girls' things.*

When asked to clarify what she meant by “girls’ things”, she replied with a chuckle:

*Girls’ things, you know. Besides, when I am at home, I spend most of my time helping mother with household chores, and my mother tells me a lot of stories about successful women. I would not talk about that with my father.*

Commenting on the same subject, Immigrant Girl 3, School C, explained that she found it easy to talk to her mother because she knew what was best for girls in terms of education. She explained this as follows:

*My mother knows the value of education. She always maintains that I attend school. She recounts how she was pushed to attend school herself by her own parents. She tells me that what she is doing to me was done to her by adults of that time. She always reminds me that she wants me to be educated because when we go back home (country of origin), I will find a higher paying job (Immigrant Girl 3, School C).*

This narrative also suggests that family conversations are gendered, and that immigrant mothers take their daughters’ education seriously, and take all the appropriate steps to influence their children’s schooling. This is supported by a study conducted by Aznar and Tenenbaum (2014:148) in Britain, which found that mothers were more likely to use emotional words and emotional content when addressing their four-year-old daughters than their four-year-old sons. They further pointed out that emotional intelligence is incredibly important for children in terms of educational success, getting along with their teachers, and having good peer relationships. According to the GST, girls who interact more often with both of their parents have more gender role knowledge and greater gender role flexibility than those who interact with them less frequently (Levy, 1989:803).

Most immigrant boys in the study revealed that they discussed their school-related issues with both parents. In this respect, Immigrant Boy 2, School B, stated thus,

*When I am from school, both my parents ask me... what I have learned about, and what it is that I need that could help me in school. I more often tell my mother what I want as she is the one who helps me. My father... talks to me about schoolwork and always refers me to my mother if I request something. But I receive support from both my parents.*

Most parents try to give equal treatment to all their children, regardless of whether it is a schooling matter. The above correspond well with research conducted by McHale, Crouter and Whiteman (2003:125), which found that mothers treat their daughters and sons in similar ways, while fathers treat them differently according to their gender, and therefore, tend to exert a stronger influence on boys. According to Martin and Ruble (2010:151), women in general have been shown to be more accepting of cross-gender behaviour than men. Similarly, the GST posits that children who interact with both parents have more gender role knowledge and greater gender role flexibility than those who interact infrequently with both of their parents (Canevello, 2016:441)

### **5.3.3 The Influence of Mothers on Immigrant Girls' Schooling**

The study also established that mothers served as role models for their daughters. Most girls in the study believed that they were inspired to learn by observing their mothers and other professional women. Immigrant Girl 4, School A, briefly expressed the inspiration she got from her mother thus:

*I would like to be like her.*

Professional women, including some immigrant children's parents in the labour market, appeared to influence their children's schooling. Immigrant Girl 5, School B, clarified this as follows:

*My mother works very hard for us (family). She is a nurse and sometimes she leaves us alone when she is on night duty. As a first-born girl, when she is on duty, I look after my younger sisters. I would like to work hard at school, so that I can be a doctor and help my mother.*

From the above excerpts, role modelling is an important factor in influencing immigrant girls' schooling aspirations. The traditional perspective of GST is that men are family breadwinners, while women stay at home and care for children. However, for immigrant parents moving to host countries, this may result in a change in role responsibilities as well as gender role socialisation. According to Tenenbaum and Leaper (2003:34), more women are active in the workforce and both parents tend to share responsibilities at home. Women who join the labour market have spurred some immigrant girls' schooling expectations as they seek to succeed in their aspirations. This is consistent with SLT, which emphasises the explicit rewards and punishments for behaving in gender-appropriate ways, as well as vicarious learning that

observation and modelling provides (Akers & Seller, 2004:85). For example, at school, girls meet other women who are not their mothers and they learn that gender roles are typically socially defined, but that they can be challenged.

#### **5.3.4 The Influence of Parental Control and Monitoring on Immigrant Children**

One of the functions of a family is to socialise children according to their gender. Socialisation of children in the family also involves monitoring and controlling children's activities and movements. According to the immigrant girls and boys interviewed in this study, family control and monitoring of children in the family is highly gendered. All the immigrant girls and boys were unanimous that their parents restricted them from performing or engaging in certain activities outside the home, after school, and during weekends, although this varied according to the child's gender. When controlling their children's movements, immigrant parents impose tougher conditions on their daughters than on their sons. Most of the immigrant girls interviewed seemed to be aware of stricter parental controls placed on them than their male siblings. This was confirmed as follows by Immigrant Girl 6, School B.

*My parents are very strict on me. They tell me that after school I should come home straight. But that does not happen to my brother, who is in the same grade as me. When I am at home, I am not allowed to play up to a time. By five o'clock, I should be home. They do not even ask my brother where he has been, but they always make sure I am in the house by this time. I do not think this is fair.*

One of the female immigrant learners who participated in the study was in the same grade and classroom as her brother at a primary school when the study was conducted. She believed that her parents targeted her and placed stricter controls on her because she was a female. She indicated that her parents did not demand her brother to report on his movements. She was restricted and expected to be in-doors by five o'clock in the afternoon, while her brother had no such time limit imposed on his movements. She explained that she was always monitored and instructed to play where her parents could see her, which she found restrictive. This finding corroborates an ethnographic study conducted across ethnic groups in the United States, which consistently showed that when regulating their children's activities outside the home, immigrant parents usually placed much stricter controls on their daughters than on their sons (Sarroub, 2002:11).



Immigrant Girl 1 indicated that her parents monitored her movements and kept an eye on her and also wanted to know about her whereabouts. Moore, Rothwell and Segrott (2010:6) are of the opinion that parents who always want to know their children's whereabouts may be trying to prevent their daughters from engaging in antisocial behaviours and/or protecting their daughters from falling into criminal hands or activities. This may also be an indication that girls are more at risk than boys, and thus girls are closely monitored, not necessarily for unfair reasons, but to protect them. Immigrant Girl 3, School C, made the following comments about how her parents controlled and monitored her:

*They restrict me from socialising with boys, especially after school. They say 'ngizojola' (I will fall in love) and I will end up pregnant. My mother even told me that a church elder (prophet) prophesied that I will get pregnant.*

Immigrant Girl 4, School A, reported that her parents refused to allow her to socialise with boys because they suspected that she would start dating at a young age [which could disturb her emotionally and distract her in her studies.]. They even invoked the prophet as a way of dissuading her from socialising with boys, as they hoped this would keep her safe from harm. In the South African context this could be true, as the World Health Organization (WHO) estimate that 12.1 in every 100 000 women are victims of femicide in South Africa, a figure which is over 100 times worse than Italy which has an average of 2.6 (WHO, 2016:2). Immigrant parents could be justified in restricting their daughters' movements considering the dangers that they are exposed to while in South Africa. Furthermore, these estimates are identical to conclusions drawn from the LISA study, which found that immigrant parents supervised their daughters far more strictly than their sons in terms of daily activities and dating (Romo, Mireles-Rios & López-Tello, 2014:27). Sometimes parents restrict their daughters because they do not want them to socialise with bad and ill-mannered people. In this regard, Immigrant Girl 5, School A, stated thus:

*My parents tell me that there are bad people out there who will teach me [to use] drugs, and that if I play with men, I will be infected with HIV/AIDS.*

As Immigrant Girl 5 disclosed, parents restrict their children because they are concerned that their (children) might contract HIV/AIDS and become exposed to the drug sub-culture. Such strict controls are beneficial to immigrant girls because they reduce their exposure to drugs, prostitution and violent environments, especially in inner cities (Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters & Holdaway, 2008:1161; Lee, 2006:17; Qin, 2009:37; Smith, 2003: 21). While immigrant girls

may view these restrictions as harsh and unfair, they could be beneficial to them in many ways. By being restricted to the home, immigrant girls, as opposed to their male counterparts, are given the opportunity to devote more of their time to complete homework and assignments. This is in line with the findings from research conducted by Zhou and Bankstone (2001:15) on Vietnamese girls, where it was established that high levels of parental control and monitoring may benefit girls by keeping them focused on activities that keep them away from the lure of the street and its risks. These include the potential to be distracted and to be drawn into illicit activities in the worst of cases. Engaging in schoolwork while at home may result in girls developing positive attitudes toward schooling and educational activities. Morris (2012:18) posited that developing positive attributes for schooling may influence immigrant girls to view school as a liberating space where they are free from their parents' monitoring and control.

### **5.3.5 The Family Influences on Immigrant Children's Roles and Responsibilities**

Immigrant learners were asked the type of role and responsibilities they were assigned at home. This question sought to determine whether immigrant girls and boys were allocated the same roles and responsibilities. The study found that immigrant families allocated roles and responsibilities to their children according to gender.

In the home environment, immigrant children provide different types of assistance to the family. During the interviews, it emerged that the immigrant girls and boys engaged in household chores, and that girls still performed more traditional roles that are typically reserved for women. A pattern that emerged strongly was that girls typically performed household chores, while boys performed other roles outside the household. For example, girls were assigned duties that benefited the family such as preparing food and caring for their siblings, while boys performed duties that were allocated outside the family such as gardening and being sent to the shops. However, there were some exceptions according to this study's findings as revealed by one immigrant girl below:

*When I come back from school, I take care of my siblings because my parents will be at work. I make sure that I sweep our house and start cooking. I also ensure that my young brother and sister take a bath. Then I do my homework, if any. I also help my mother run a Spaza shop [an informal convenience shop] (Immigrant Girl 1, School C).*

Immigrant Girl 2, School A, echoed similar sentiments as follows.

*My parents go to work before we wake up, so I have the responsibility [to] wake up my sisters and brothers. I ensure that I bath them, prepare food, and dress them. After they have eaten, I clean the dishes, and I take them to school. I also bring them back. They wait for me. During weekends, I help mother sell vegetables. Luckily, the school is not far away from our home. I also help my siblings with homework. Sometimes I accompany my mother to school so I may explain some of the things school authorities say. She can't speak the local language; she speaks Rwandese [Kinyarwanda].*

As indicated above, both of these female participants reported that they performed chores that are commonly associated with girls, namely, cleaning, cooking, bathing siblings, and preparing food for the family; these are the types of chores that women traditionally do. Some of the duties that immigrant children perform are duties that are normally done by parents such as caring for their siblings. This may imply that some parents of immigrant children work and/or are trying to raise money through other means. This also indicates that immigrant families face socioeconomic challenges in their host countries. Another female participant also explained that she helped her siblings with homework. Within these broad roles of immigrant girls, some could be classified as schooling duties which are discussed later in this section.

While girls reported that they fulfilled the roles and responsibilities that are typically regarded associated with women, some boys also indicated that they performed domestic chores, although boys are not typically involved in domestic duties. In this regard, one immigrant boy stated:

*I help my sister and young brother with homework. I do also help clean the house and tidy up outside the house, although I cannot cook well. I take my sister and brother to school and help my mother when she goes out shopping (Immigrant Boy 3, School C).*

In the same vein, Immigrant Boy 4, School B, said:

*I cook for my sisters and brothers. I sweep the house and clean. I also do wash. I am the first-born you know, and if I do not do these duties, we cannot eat.*

Two male immigrant children also indicated that they participated in domestic chores; however, some duties that they performed were outdoor duties as opposed to the indoor duties performed by their female counterparts. Some outdoor duties that immigrant boys are expected to perform are doing shopping, tidying outside, and possibly tending the garden. Like the girls, the boys also sometimes take care of their siblings, accompany them to school, and fetch them after school. One male participant mentioned that he was the first-born in the family, implying that, in spite of their stereotypes about the gender roles, the elder brother or sister is responsible for caring for younger siblings, a duty usually performed by parents. One male immigrant participant explained that he had to sweep the house, clean, and get his siblings ready for school. According to the GST, these immigrant girls and boys internalise roles according to their gender. However, in this study, it has emerged that some immigrant boys performed duties that are typically reserved for women. This means that socially defined roles are not rigid, are susceptible to change and may be modified to suit prevailing conditions.

Immigrant Boy 7, School B, was conscious of the prevailing gender stereotypes; he assertively remarked:

*I am the first-born and if I do not cook just because I am a boy, we may go hungry.*

This assertion underscores that he was also able to recognise that there are exceptions to stereotypes (Katz & Ksansnak, 1994:272; Serbin, Moller, Gulko, Colburne, Powlishta & Guiko, 1993:7). However, the literature seems to suggest that girls demonstrate greater gender role flexibility than boys (Bakir & Palan, 2010:35), and it might be added that maturity plays a role in this regard. Boys who are brought up in a gender-mixed environment are likely to be less gender-stereotyped, more flexible, and likely to acquire a wider range of skills than boys who grow up in gender-stereotyped environments.

### **5.3.6 The Influence of the Family on Role Allocation related to Schooling**

This section refers to the findings presented in the previous section because some schooling roles that immigrant children mentioned were not discussed in detail. The concepts that will be discussed include helping with homework and helping with translation.

Most immigrant boys and girls interviewed mentioned that one of the roles that they played in the family was helping their younger siblings to complete their homework. Immigrant parents are obliged to provide academic support and to assist their children with homework, as

assignments and projects contribute to final the test and examination results. However, for certain reasons, younger immigrant children seek assistance from their older siblings because their parents are absent and/or are unable to speak, write, and/or read the local language because of a language barrier. A point in case is one immigrant girl from Rwanda, who claimed that her parents could not “*speak, read and write*” the local language, and as a result, she helped her siblings with their homework assignments. Due to the educational limitation and language barrier of her parents, she was compelled to assist her siblings with their homework. This is consistent with Gregory, Long and Volk’s (2004:223) views that immigrant parents do not understand the host country’s language and do not have the institutional savvy to help their children, and because of this gap, the siblings help “*bridge some home school differences*” in the teaching and learning processes. Some immigrant parents work long hours and do not have sufficient time to assist their children with homework, and therefore, the older siblings play an important part in standing in for their absent parents. In this regard, Immigrant Girl 1, School A, stated:

*Sometimes I accompany my mother to school so I may explain to her the things school authorities say.*

It is evident from the above discussion that this Immigrant Girl 1, School A, helped to interpret and translate school documents or information for her parents since they could not speak, read and write local languages as well as English because they only spoke Kinyarwanda, the national language of Rwanda. According to the literature review (cf. Section 3.3.1) girls in immigrant families often serve as a go-between the home and school by filling in school forms, accompanying their parents to school meetings, and even helping entire immigrant communities in a given geopolitical area (Roeser, Peck & Nasir, 2006:391). They also help translate for their younger siblings at school, if at any time misunderstandings arise between their siblings and teachers. In this study, girls contributed more to the education of younger siblings than boys because of their ability to negotiate the dynamics and intricacies of home and school.

#### **5.4 THE INFLUENCE OF PEERS ON GENDERED EXPERIENCES OF IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AT SCHOOL**

The researcher explored how peers and sociocultural factors influence friendship patterns at school.

#### 5.4.1 Peer Influence on the Choice of Friendship Patterns at School

A question was posed as to whether immigrant children received assistance from peers of the same gender and/or the opposite gender while they were at school. A follow-up question in this regard sought to ascertain the type of assistance immigrant children received from their peers and friends. The findings indicate that girls' and boys' preferences when asking for help from other peers differed according to their gender. All the girls in the study sought help from other girls rather than from boys, while some boys preferred to seek help from girls as opposed to boys, and other boys chose to seek help from other boys.

Immigrant Girl 6, School B, remarked:

*I seek help from other girls. If I ask for help from boys, people might think "siyajola" [engaged in a relationship]. Also, boys can put you into temptations. You may end up in a relationship. This will put me in trouble with my parents. They always tell me to leave boys alone. When I am with other girls, we discuss what we learn in life skills, for example, period pains. I ask my friends to help me with assessments, homework, and other school projects. Sometimes I ask my friends to provide me with period pads if I do not have them.*

Immigrant Girl 7; School B, stated:

*I ask for help from girls; besides seeking for assistance for homework, assignments, and discussing projects, I get information about what age period pains start. They tell me when period pains start and tell me what I should do once they start. We also share pads. I do not study with boys at all.*

The preference of girls to ask for help from other girls is in line with previous literature (c.f. Section 3.7.1) that established that girls are more likely to seek help, especially adaptive forms of help, are more likely to perceive the benefits of help-seeking in comparison to boys and that they seek out help more readily than boys (Makara & Karabenick, 2013:58).

Immigrant girls in this study stated that they sought help for schooling issues such as homework, assignments, discussing projects, and other school-related activities. A similar sentiment was echoed by Immigrant Girl 8, School A:

*I ask for help from girls. Besides, I seek assistance for homework, assignments, and discussing projects.*

This suggests that immigrant girls realised that by seeking support and collaborating with others, they might benefit and receive good results. For example, in a study of Latino high school students, Stanton-Salazar et al. (2001:9) (cf. section 3.7.1) found that girls exhibited a greater desire for academic support and assistance from other girls than from boys. Thompson, Cothran and McCall (2012:25) found similar results. Those who sought academic support were more likely to perform well at school and request further help, and to assist others with their school projects. These learners were able to recognise their need for assistance and to identify appropriate sources of help, to communicate their problems clearly, and to accurately apply the help they received (Karabenick & Berger, 2013:237). Furthermore, Newman (2000:350) found that perceived academic competence was positively associated with intentions to seek help (cf. section 3.7.1).

The constant mention of “*siyajola*” (we are in a relationship) indicates that although these girls were at primary school level, they were approaching maturity or had passed the puberty stage where the topic of relationships typically takes centre stage. The following remark from Immigrant Girl 2, School B, suggests that while girls discuss school-related activities, they also touched on private and or social issues. In her own words, Immigrant Girl 2, School B, said,

*I seek help from other girls. If I ask help from “boys” people might think “siyajola” [engaged in a relationship]. Also, boys can put you into temptations. You may end up in a relationship.*

The terms favoured by immigrant girls were: “*siyajola*”; “*put me in temptations*”; and “*end up in a relationship*”. This may mean that the girls’ worlds are concerned with emotions, and this is likely to distract them from their schooling. The literature suggests that talk about boys is very common among female teenagers, as is talk about separation, first love, couple problems, and the pressure to begin sexual relationships (Rose, 2002:1830). The conclusions drawn could be that at this level, girls’ personal lives are exciting and characterised by discussing boys, their love lives and sharing secrets. This may impact on girls’ concentration on school activities, as they seem to be preoccupied with gender-related issues, which may lower their academic achievement.

The study also found that immigrant girls are restricted in seeking help from boys because their actions would be deemed “*gender inappropriate*” by their parents. One immigrant girl stated that her parents may “*not approve*” if she sought help from boys. This underscores that there was heavy parental control and monitoring of immigrant girls’ activities, and that parents

sanctioned behaviours through reward and punishment that they deemed appropriate or inappropriate. Parents overtly or intentionally shape the behaviours, attitudes, and interests of male and female children, and they socialise their children according to what is appropriate and inappropriate to their children's gender. This finding echoes the observations made by Weiten, Dunn and Hammer (2017:314) (cf. section 3.6.3) that girls acquire the sex-appropriate behaviours of femininity, and boys acquire the sex-appropriate behaviours of masculinity via rewards, punishment, observation and imitating models within a given society. This could also reflect the socialisation patterns and gender role allocations that immigrant girls receive early on. However, the immigrant girls' refusal to seek help from boys may be detrimental to educational their activities, since this may restrict them from sharing educational knowledge and prevent them from acquiring social interpersonal and communication skills that are necessary in real-life situations. This could lead to lower academic performance, and a lack of social skills, which could hinder their academic and social development.

It also emerged in the interviews with immigrant girls that they used friendship as a way of communicating and gathering information about their feminine hygiene. Immigrant Girl 3, School C, revealed this thus,

*When I am with other girls, we discuss that we learn in life skills, for example, period pains.*

In the same vein, another participant stated,

*I get information about what age period pains start, they tell me when period pains start, and tell me what I should do once they start. We also share pads.*

Immigrant Girl 4, School A, also mentioned:

*...getting information about the age at which periods pain start and the sharing of pads.*

Previous research by Shulman, Zlotnik, Shachar-Shapira, Connolly and Bohr (2012:595) established that sharing and disclosing "personal secrets" is more prevalent among girls than boys, both during childhood and adolescence. This may also suggest that friendship gatherings are used as information centres where immigrant girls discuss personal hygiene issues related to their stages of development. In these friendship meetings, girls discuss issues regarded as feminine or for "girls only". For example, during these meetings, the girls discuss personal



hygiene issues such as when period pains start, what action to take, and above all, how to manage the whole process. Failure to manage the process may lead to embarrassment and loss of confidence, as menstrual periods can have an indirect impact on schooling. According to Kirk and Sommers (2006:30), menstruation creates a set of physical, sociocultural, and economic challenges that may interfere with a young woman's ability to attend school or to participate fully in classroom activities. For example, in a study by Glynn, Kayuni, Sian, Banda, Francis-Chizororo, Tanton, Molesworth, Hemmings, Crampin and French (2010:1-8) (cf. section 2.4.3.1) in Malawi, they found that the age of menarche was significantly associated with the timing of school dropout, but that the association was fully explained by the timing of a young woman's sexual debut.

Some of the boys interviewed said that they did not seek assistance from girls, while others stated that they did.

Immigrant Boy 3, School B, stated that he did not seek help from girls made the following statement:

*I get help from other boys. Boys do not get help from girls. So I ask for assistance from other boys. They help me with maths.*

The statement, "Boys do not get help from girls" may be a public relations exercise to maintain their "masculine", "tough", and "cool" facades in front of their male friends, who are uninterested in things that pass as "feminine" (Andersson, Ho-Foster, Matthis, Marokoane, Mashiane, Mhatre & Ngxowa, 2004; 329) or fear of being viewed as "weak" or "girlish", which may reduce their power and influence on other boys. The fact that boys are not interested in seeking help from girls may have negative ramifications at school. For example, it may limit educational benefits associated with group discussions, which may limit the development of social skills which are important in future. Also, children who refuse help from others do not appreciate the value of help, and therefore are unlikely to perform well at school.

Some immigrant boys indicated that they sought help from girls, and this may suggest that they were gender-neutral and thus more accommodating of other genders. This indicates that they realised the value of benefitting from "intelligent" and "clever" people, which is how girls were described in the study. As one immigrant stated,

*Eish! I seek assistance from girls. I seek assistance from girls because many people say girls are [more] intelligent and cleverer than boys. I want girls to*

*help me, so I can be clever and intelligent like them* (Immigrant Boy 7, School B).

The findings from the study suggest that while some immigrant boys preferred not to seek help from girls, others sought it, and thus could be considered being “gender-neutral”. Gender-neutral immigrant boys who asked for help from girls might have been raised in places where both girls and boys were exposed to conditions that were favourable to both genders. This is consistent with literature that reveals that children who have been exposed to a combination of feminine and masculine-stereotyped toys and activities like dolls, cars, dress and sports are likely to increase their range of skills (Areh, 2010:559). By implication, girls and boys who are socialised in mixed-gender environments are more likely to acquire extra skills that enable them to associate efficiently with both genders. The statement, “*I seek assistance from girls because many people say girls are more intelligent and cleverer than boys*”, shows an appreciation of a girl’s abilities, and acknowledges that by seeking help from them, the gender-neutral immigrant boys are likely to perform better academically.

Furthermore, a study by the OECD (2017:1) established that girls were much better than boys at working together to solve problems. It also determined that girls were 1.6 times more likely than boys to be top performers in collaborative problem-solving, while boys were found to be 1.6 times more likely than girls to be lower achievers. The concept of girls being “intelligent” and “clever”, as mentioned by gender-neutral immigrant boys could be justified and seeking help from girls could therefore be a fitting way for boys to benefit from mixed-gender friendships. Orlitzky and Benjamin's (2003:128) study showed that mixed-gender groups outperformed more homogeneous groups. In teaming up with girls, immigrant boys would be composing mixed-gender friendship teams that could solve problems in areas such as homework, assignments, projects, and other school-related activities.

For some immigrant boys, the decision to seek help from girls instead of boys is based on undisciplined, destructive behaviours and a lack of commitment to schoolwork by some boys. Immigrant Boy 8, School B, captured this as follows:

*I will ask for help for my schoolwork from the girls.... boys –Ah! Boys! – Their brains are not working well they are undisciplined and full of play. No, I am not full of play. But others are very destructive in class.*

The assertion that he avoided seeking assistance from some boys because “*their brains are not working well*”, suggests that they lacked coordination, were unstable, disruptive, boisterous, out of control, undisciplined, and “*full of play*” (playful) when working on schoolwork. In a study that compared the academic attributes of boys and girls, McKie (2010:13) found that female students were rated higher than men in terms of traits such as effort, cooperation, initiative, and order and communications skills. Warrington and Younger (2000:493) further established that in contrast to girls, boys are less inclined to involve themselves in discussions, are unwilling to collaborate with girls to learn, and are less likely to be team players.

Disruptive behaviour distracts other learners from concentrating, and this may have a negative impact on their assignments or learning projects. Destructive behaviours and poor discipline also repel some immigrant boys. As a result, they prefer to seek help from girls rather than boys. A fruitful, safe, and peaceful environment is necessary for creative thinking in the learning process at school.

#### **5.4.2 Perceptions of being Bullied and Discrimination at by Local Children**

The study established that at certain times both immigrant girls and boys experienced bullying and discrimination by local children at school, with girls experiencing threats of physical assault and verbal abuse, whereas boys experienced physical confrontations and verbal insults. At the same time, the immigrant girls and boys reported that they experienced indirect forms of hostility, such as social isolation, racial and ethnic mocking, and slurs.

##### **5.4.2.1 Threats of physical assault, confrontations, and verbal insults**

The most common types of bullying used against immigrant children were physical threats, confrontation, and verbal insults. As for immigrant girls, the most common types of bullying directed at them included physical threats, verbal abuse, and insults, mostly from local boys rather than immigrant boys. The following comment from an immigrant girl shows the extent of verbal abuse that immigrant learners had to endure from some local children:

*I was mostly bullied when I was in Grade 5 by boys. Specifically, boys! They always waited for me outside the school, made mocking gestures and signs, as if they wanted to beat me up. Every day some of them would threaten to beat me up just because you a ‘border jumper’ and you will tell no one [emotional]. Other children know him. If he was with his friend, they will tell me I am rubbish and must not come near them because my armpits smell. They also said it’s not*

*in Tsholotsho [a place in Zimbabwe] here. I told my teacher, and she talked to them (Immigrant Girl 2, School B).*

The above revelation indicates that some local boys rejected and victimised immigrant children, particularly girls. They used various forms of bullying, such as physical threats, mocking gestures, direct insults, teasing and veiled threats of physical harm to make their intentions known. This finding closely resembles another one in a study conducted by Shute, Owens and Slee (2008:477) on immigrant girls' experiences of bullying and victimisation in the USA. These researchers found that boys' bullying of girls was an everyday occurrence, which involved physical threats and verbal abuse, such as racial taunts and slurs. In this study, there were no reports of immigrant girls being bullied by local girls – not that girls did not bully each other – but the girl-on-girl incidents of victimisation were so low that they did not warrant mentioning or reporting. However, literature has shown that girls are more involved in situations of indirect violence, such as malicious gossip (Silva, Pereira, Mendonça, Nunes & de Oliveira, 2013:13).

Furthermore, in this study, it emerged that immigrant girls also experienced name-calling, such as being referred to as a “border jumpers”; however, this could mean all immigrant children, including boys. The use of the name-calling, such as “border jumper”, may imply that these immigrant children are in South Africa illegally. While some name-calling may impact negatively on these children, some children were amused by the name-calling and appeared to like being called by their nicknames, for example, the Nigerian girls were referred to as “*Mama Lagos*”, while boys were called “*Oga*”, which they appeared to accept. This also involved mimicking and/or imitating how Nigerians talk and pronounce words and their actions. Bullying using derogatory names is very common in immigrant circles. For example, a study conducted in the UK by Hay, Meldrum and Mann (2010:130) found that in a group of 13–17-year olds, over half the name-calling that took place referred to racial names, and over 60 different abusive names were used. The researcher is of the view that there is little gender difference between girls and boys when it comes to ethnic shaming and racial name-calling.

The mention of a place of a country, for example, “*Tsholotsho*” has social, political, and economic connotations. Tsholotsho is a rural district in Zimbabwe that is characterised by abject poverty and a severe lack of service delivery, such as poor healthcare services, poor road networks, and a lack of skilled manpower. According to Vandeyar (2013:256), Zimbabweans

are ostracised due to perceptions that they came from a poverty-stricken country that lacks resources.

As indicated earlier, the study found that immigrant girls experienced physical threats and verbal abuse in South African schools, and that immigrant boys experienced physical confrontation in addition to verbal abuse and social distancing as expressed in the extract below.

*When I first came to this school, I could not speak any local languages other than English. Everyone was aware I was not from this country. My trouble began there. Other boys started to tease and insult me. They did not want to play with me. They said I was smelly and poor. They said I was very black*  
(Immigrant Boy 3, School B).

The above extract indicates that immigrant boys and girls are likely to report the same types of bullying from local learners. The inability to communicate in local languages appears to trigger hostilities towards immigrant children. If the immigrant children are unable to speak a local language, they are likely to experience social rejection, where local children avoid playing with them or rebuke them just because of their immigrant status. Exclusion from mainstream groups may lead to social isolation, negative ramifications for schoolwork, and may affect the immigrant children's school performance.

Local learners tend to insult the immigrant children because of their skin tone. Vandeyar (2013:256) vividly captures local learners' categorisation of immigrant learners according to their skin colour. She established that many local learners label immigrant learners according to their "blackness". This categorisation is often accompanied by racial and xenophobic slurs and denigrations aimed at inflicting emotional pain on immigrant learners. For example, local learners label immigrant learners as black, smelly, and/or poor. Research suggests that immigrant boys are more exposed to racial and ethnic bullying than immigrant girls (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002:310), considering that they report greater ethnic victimisation than girls do. It has also been reported that local learners made derogatory references to cultural names as a pretext to mock, tease and victimise immigrant learners (Rigby, 2002:20). Immigrant Boy 4 confirmed this ethnic stereotype as follows,

*Other children laugh at me because they say my name is funny. Teachers too make it worse; they cannot pronounce my name correctly, so whenever they try*

*to call my name, other children would tease me. Sometimes I try to fight back*  
(Immigrant Boy 4, School B).

The findings show that immigrant learners' names are used as a source of bullying, mocking, teasing and xenophobic slurs. In studying immigrant learners in South African secondary schools, Vandeyar (2013:256) found that many of them have unique surnames that serve as markers of 'foreignness' and that local learners then used these unusual names to victimise immigrant learners. As a result, physical confrontations are inevitable; for example, immigrant boys are likely to fight back if they feel ridiculed. It has also been established that boys are more likely to get involved in physical fights than girls. Previous research shows that boys are commonly victims and perpetrators of direct forms of bullying (Silva et al., 2013:13). In addition, bullied immigrant children may feel unsafe at school which could contribute to lowered self-esteem and in negative schooling outcomes.

#### **5.4.3 Immigrant Children's Perceptions of Discrimination in the Classroom**

The teaching-learning environment in schools is symbolic in the lives of immigrant children, with language becoming a vehicle through which immigrant children are discriminated against both inside and outside the classroom due to their perceived immigrant status. This discrimination is triggered by immigrant children's inability to communicate in any of the local languages during learning and teaching, playing outside the classroom, and in group work in the classroom as indicated below.

*During my first time in class, I could not speak Sepedi and isiZulu local languages that are spoken in this school. I could not understand anything. During learning, if the teacher asked me to read in a local language, I had difficulties, and often read the words incorrectly. Other children would burst out laughing and imitated what I said. Worse still, the teacher would teach in Sepedi even if it were an English lesson, and no one explained to me what the teacher said. Sometimes, when she is marking our books, she would read out to the class what I have read written, and they would laugh and make gestures at me. I felt embarrassed* (Immigrant Boy 4, School B).

Another immigrant girl stated:

*I do not have a problem with the teacher in the classroom; the problem is with other learners in group work. They refuse to allow me to participate in the*

*group, saying I will force them to use English when we are discussing because I do not understand local languages (Immigrant Girl 1, School A).*

This study found that there were no significant differences in discrimination between immigrant girls and boys in the classroom, with both genders being exposed to some form of segregation during learning and teaching. Teachers might also be responsible for exacerbating the hostilities between immigrant students and local children by showing impatience when immigrant children struggled to master the local languages. For example, the teacher “*read out*” his written work to the whole class, and this may give rise to “playful” insults, and verbal sparring; this may result in lowered self-confidence in targeted individuals. When teachers and other learners discriminate against immigrant children, their schooling may be negatively affected, leading to lower performance. For example, during group work, immigrant children claimed that their contributions and/or participation were often rejected because this would force the local learners to communicate in English, which they were not prepared to do. Preventing immigrant learners from participating in group discussions denies them access to knowledge and information that is vital for their learning outcomes and this could lead to “narrow lowered learning experiences” and lowered expectations (Adair, 2014:217). Perhaps, the use of indigenous languages by local learners was a discriminatory tactic used to exclude and ostracise the immigrant learners.

#### **5.4.4 Relationships between Immigrant Children and Local Learners**

The need to belong and make friends is crucial in a human’s life, and more so for immigrant children who have left their childhood friends in their home countries. Friends play an important role because they influence the quality of life that an immigrant child can experience. For immigrant children who are new to schools and who cannot speak local languages, the need to make friends becomes necessary to create conditions that will enable them to fit into the local culture and be absorbed into their new world. Immigrants need to enter the culture of the new community (Bruna & Chamberlin, 2008:123). The inability to communicate in a local language could lead to isolation, loneliness, and feelings of despondency, which could create a situation in which immigrant children are pushed aside by others. This may lead to weakened personal development that impact negatively on schooling outcomes as depicted in the extract below.

*They do not like us at all; some of them at least. During playtime, they push us aside because we are not yet familiar with the games’ rules they play. But*

*others accept us and teach us how the games are played. I sometimes feel out of place* (Immigrant Girl 1, School A).

It also emerged from the interviews that some local girls did not want immigrant girls to participate in the games when they played. Being refused permission to play with classmates leads to social exclusion and reduces an immigrant child's capacity to develop new friendships, which may diminish their capacities to develop their full potential.

#### **5.4.5 Immigrant Children's Gendered Expectations and Aspirations**

In general, immigrant children seem to have high expectations and aspirations in a host country. A comparison between immigrant boys and girls in terms of expectations and aspirations on the value of schooling shows that there was no difference as they both expressed a willingness and enthusiasm to learn. The high expectations and aspirations expressed by immigrant girls and boys could reflect their families' educational expectations for their children. Research consistently shows that parental expectations are a causal determinant of student expectations and academic outcomes (Rutchick, Smyth, Lopoo & Duse, 2009:392). In the same vein, immigrant parents see more opportunities for success and feel more optimistic about their children's future, which then leads to them to behave in ways that promote educational success (Feliciano & Lanuza, 2016:758; Fuligni & Fuligni, 2007:14; Raleigh & Kao 2010:1083). Immigrant girls and boys are aware that acquiring sound knowledge and work skills at an early age shapes prosperous future, which underscores the importance of education. Immigrant Girl 4, School A, clarified this as follows:

*School gives me wider knowledge. It also gives me independence when I am grown up. When you find work, you can buy your own house and stay with your family.*

The essence of the above excerpt is that obtaining a good education through effective schooling enables learners to acquire appropriate knowledge and skills necessary for survival in life. This implies that knowledge and skills obtained in school may be used to secure a decent job in the future. Furthermore, the participant was of the view that getting an education would enable her to become independent, and that a good education empowers girls to make decisions about their lives, that is, make their own choices and use education as a tool to confront gender inequalities. Immigrant Boy 3, School C, stated:



*At school, I learn many things. School makes me to be what I want to be. For example, I want to be a teacher. If I do not come to school daily, I will not be a teacher. Jobs need people who are educated.*

Many immigrant children devote much of their time to schooling because education offers them an opportunity to learn about rules and regulations that guide them throughout life. According to the findings of this study, education fulfils immigrant children's expectations, and creates pathways for future employment and job opportunities. Besides creating job opportunities and future wellbeing, education facilitates immigrant children's adaptation processes by enabling them to learn about the South African cultures and languages. African languages enable immigrant children to integrate, gain acceptance, and develop a sense of belonging in the communities where they live.

#### **5.4.6 Homework Completion**

Homework is very important to immigrant learners because it enables them to practise concepts that they may not have understood during classroom lessons, particularly African languages, a subject in which most immigrant children lag. Homework completion appears to be gendered, with girls being more likely to complete and hand it in than boys as seen in the excerpts below.

*Most of the time, I complete homework at school. This is because if there is something I do not understand, I can seek clarity from my teacher and my friends. Sometimes I complete homework at home and get help from my parents. Both places suit me. I always meet deadlines and hand over homework on time. I do not have a problem with my teacher (Immigrant Girl 5, School A).*

Working on the homework either at school or home seems to enable immigrant girls to submit their homework on time and meet the submission deadlines. Research on gender differences in terms of doing homework has revealed that in comparison to boys, girls more frequently report using strategies such as managing their workspace, allocating their time, and monitoring their emotions (Xu, 2006:73). This indicates that girls give more attention to homework and are more likely to enjoy doing homework than their male counterparts. It was established that immigrant boys did not appear to follow any strategies when doing homework.

*To tell the truth, I do not always hand over my homework on time. After school, I go home and play, and most of the time I forget to do homework until the following morning; or when my friends remind me. The teacher is often angry*

*and detains us to complete homework while at school (Immigrant Boy 6, School B).*

While most girls reported that they completed their homework at school and home, boys tended to do their homework at home where they were unlikely to be supervised by their parents. This is in line with previous studies which showed that girls were more committed to doing homework than boys (Núñez, Suárez, Rosário, Vallejo, Valle & Epstein, 2015:37; Xu, 2007:173). Studies on achievement and self-regulated learning have shown that girls tend to master goal orientation, intrinsic motivation, and greater cognitive engagement than boys (Di Prete & Buchmann, 2013:15). This suggests that there could be a link between doing homework and academic achievement. By implication, girls are more likely to perform better in their studies than boys given that they show more commitment in doing homework.

#### **5.4.7 Corporal Punishment**

The study also established that the immigrant children's inability to do and submit homework is likely to attract corporal punishment from teachers. While corporal punishment has been abolished in South African schools, teachers often use the cane to punish those children who do not complete their homework and hand it in on time. It emerged from the interviews that corporal punishment was administered to both immigrant boys and girls, and that boys tended to be punished more severely than girls. The following episode highlights some forms of corporal punishment administered to immigrant learners.

*My teacher beats me on the hands with a small piece of pipe if I do not hand over homework on time, and it is very painful. Sometimes I blame myself for not completing homework. Most of the time I must collect my siblings at a nursery school, which is a distance from where I stay. So, I don't have enough time to do my homework (Immigrant Girl 2, School B).*

Interviews with the immigrant boys revealed that those who did not complete and submit their homework on time were sometimes lashed on their buttocks in full view of their peers as seen in the following extract. In this respect, Immigrant Boy 4, School B, disclosed:

*I was ordered to stretch my legs apart and bend down, and a piece of an old pipe was used to beat my buttocks in full public view of the class, because I did not complete homework the previous day. It was painful, but I blamed myself for not doing my homework, instead... after school I went straight to play.*

The reasons given by some immigrant girls as to why they failed to do their homework were directly linked to the domestic chores that they were expected to perform at home after school, such as caring for their siblings, cooking and house cleaning, in the absence of their parents. The reasons given by most immigrant boys as to why they did not complete their homework were personal, with most boys admitting to going to play with their friends after school. To instil discipline, teachers sometimes applied corporal punishment and detention as strategies of forcing children to complete their homework and hand it in on time. Teachers applied different types of corporal punishment to immigrant girls and boys, with girls being beaten on the hands, while boys were beaten on the buttocks. It could be deduced from an account of one boy that boys were beaten in full view of his peers to humiliate them and send a warning to other boys who did not complete their homework on time. In addition, parents and teachers connive where parents give teachers permission to use corporal punishment to their children when they misbehave. This might reflect a long-standing tradition belief and practice where it is standard practice to discipline children through corporal punishment. However, research has consistently shown that the use of corporal punishment does not lead to improved behaviour; instead children who are beaten at school perform more poorly than children who do not receive corporal punishment (Straus & Paschal, 2009:459).

#### **5.4.8 Crossing the Border using Modern Technology**

It came out from the interviews that most immigrant learners, particularly girls, still had intimate social and emotional attachment to their relatives in their home countries, and constantly talked to them. This shows that immigrant children maintain strong family bonds with their family relatives left behind, and thus “build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders” (Lazar, 2011:69) despite the vast distance from their home countries. Immigrant girls, as opposed to boys, appeared to be still more socially attached to their relatives, particularly their grandmothers and friends back home.

Immigrant Girl 5, School A, confirmed the above scenario:

*Yes, I frequently talk to my grandmother, every month. Whenever mother sends her money and food, I talk to my cousins and friends too, whenever I get the chance. We send each other pictures and family events through WhatsApp and on Facebook.*

In contrast, Immigrant Boy 2, School B, stated:

*I only spoke to my relatives once when I first came in this country some two years ago, but mother and father talk to them more often.*

The findings suggest that girls use their intimate relationships with their mothers to maintain contact with their relatives, while boys appear to have less contact with family members across the borders. By implication, immigrant girls are more likely to maintain their cultural and ethnic identity in their host country than boys. In addition, they are also more likely to return for a visit or permanently, because of their unbroken communication with their relatives back home. While investigating the integration experiences and challenges of immigrant students in South African schools, Madziyire (2016:85) found that up to 86% of the respondents stated that they maintained communication with their relatives back home, ranging from daily and weekly to monthly. According to Parrenas (2005:318), it is impossible for immigrants to escape the “social and geographic inequalities [that] shape the quality of intimacy in transnational family life”.

The use of modern technologies is key to preserving family linkages across borders. Dankbaar and de Jong (2014: 257) argued that recent technological advances such as the internet and cable television allow immigrants to be in constant communication with their families and communities in their home countries. Technological innovations such as mobile phones ensure that immigrant children communicate with their distant families, and send images and texts that carry multiple messages to their relatives in the home countries (Athique, 2013:13), using different social media tools such as WhatsApp, Facebook and YouTube. The use of technology promotes frequent contact between families, and therefore, extends cultural and ethnic links across borders. At the same time, immigrant learners use technology to socialise with new friends in the host country, thus making it a double-edged technique used to maintain the cultural identity of one’s home country, and a tool to help immigrant children adapt to their new communities.

## **5.5 SOUTH AFRICAN TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF IMMIGRANT CHILDREN**

The following section presents the South African teachers’ perceptions of immigrant children.

### 5.5.1 South African Teachers' Perceptions of Immigrant Children

The South African teachers' general perceptions of immigrant children could be grouped broadly into four themes: local language challenges and code-switching, absenteeism during the first term, relationships with other learners and academic performance.

With regard to the first theme, it was established that the immigrant children's inability to speak, write and read a local South African language was a challenge in the classroom and in their social environment, as it was used as a means of communication and instruction. According to the South African teachers, most immigrant children could not read, write or speak local languages, and this placed them at a disadvantage in learning and teaching situations, as they did not understand the concepts taught in these languages. Teacher 1 stated:

*Some of the immigrant children have learning difficulties because they cannot read, write, and speak... local South African languages. These children are from countries such as Angola, DRC, and some from Zimbabwe. So, when teaching specifically languages, they face challenges. Sometimes, even if we teach in English, if children do not understand, we code-switch to the local language to explain concepts, and this impacts negatively on foreign children in the classroom.*

These teachers acknowledged that the inability to communicate in the local South African languages was a barrier that impacted negatively on some of the immigrant learners' learning outcomes. Children who cannot speak, read, or write any of the local languages of assessment do not do well in spelling, reading or grammar, and are unlikely to perform well at school (OECD, 2017:5). Thus, it is vital that immigrant children should be offered extra language lessons in order to improve their academic achievement. Furthermore, teachers were of the view that code-switching during teaching placed immigrant children at a disadvantage, since this involved changing from English, which is the language of instruction, to a local language in order to accommodate those who did not understand the concept being explained. A study by Vandeyar (2013:9) on South African learners established that black African immigrant learners were doubly disadvantaged since they entered the country lacking proficiency in both English and any of the local African languages. The research confirmed that these students are disadvantaged when the teacher code-switches during teaching in order to ensure that the local black students fully understand what is being taught.

This suggests that some teachers use local languages as a means of instruction, even though the official language of instruction is English, thus placing immigrant children at a disadvantage. Additionally, the use of indigenous languages in South Africa is held in high esteem, and immigrant children who cannot speak any of these languages are likely to be discriminated against and stigmatised, thus placing significant pressure on them to learn the local languages. This pressure is unhealthy, as researchers note that children should not abandon their own language to speak and write local South African languages (Nyika, 2015:3). In contrast, Gibson (1995:11) and Valenzuela (1999:12) contend that teachers should encourage bilingualism and respect immigrant learners' cultural heritage so that they can be encouraged to value their cultures, and to encourage bilingualism.

### **5.5.2 Absenteeism Problem during the First Term of the Year**

Absenteeism is a serious problem in South African schools (Phurutse, 2005:31), especially during the first term of the year, as most immigrant children do not return to school immediately after the long holidays. In this respect, teachers stated that they experienced delays in the return of immigrant children from their home countries, which affected the school's average performance rates.

*Some immigrant children are here illegally with no proper documentation, so when it is time to go back home (own country) during the December holidays, they use illegal means to return to their countries of origin. When it is time to come back from the holidays, it becomes difficult, because during the December-January period, security is tight at the border, and sometimes, like those from Zimbabwe, the Limpopo River is overflowing, so they cannot cross to the South African side. So, they are get stuck at the other side of the river until the time becomes convenient for them to cross...Meanwhile the school has opened and teaching and learning is in progress, which is a disadvantage for immigrant children, and this impacts negatively on the school's average (Teacher 2; School A).*

Another South African teacher described the state of immigrant learners when they return from long holidays thus,

*Most immigrant children arrive after three to four weeks when schools have already opened in the first term. Some of them arrive depressed and reserved*

*because a relative and/or parent has been arrested or refused entry at the border. Other immigrant children have anxiety signs. What these children have witnessed impacts negatively on their schoolwork, and as a result, they perform poorly at school (Teacher 4, School C).*

Teachers were of the view that immigrant children were disadvantaged when it came to School-Based Assessments (SBAs) because during the three to four weeks, in which they were absent, teaching and learning took place. During that time, the immigrant children would not have learned the content that would be included in formal assessments that would determine their marks at the end of the term. Teachers also stated that schools did not have any teaching recovery plans for immigrant children and this placed the onus on individual teachers to establish suitable catch-up programmes for remediation.

#### 5.5.3 Teachers' perceptions of immigrant children based on country of origin

The South African teachers' perceptions of immigrant children revealed some stereotypes and appeared to be gendered and based on the immigrant children's countries of origin. Typically, Ghanaian and Zimbabwean children are described as all-rounders and are disciplined in the classrooms, while Nigerian children are generally considered to be noisy and destructive in classrooms. These perceptions are captured in the excerpts below.

*Nigerians are too noisy. They raise their voices when they talk, and this tends to distract other learners, especially when they are busy with classwork. The Ghanaians are very clever, particularly the girls who work very hard. I have this girl in my class; she is so intelligent. She has befriended a South African girl. This South African girl was not doing well, but now her performance has greatly improved (Teacher 5, School B).*

In addition, Teacher 2 had this to say:

*In the classroom, Zimbabweans are all-rounders with girls doing overall better than boys. Besides, Zimbabwean girls are very receptive and disciplined; they still show those old values of respect in the classroom (Teacher 4, School B).*

The teachers' perceptions expressed above, confirm the findings of an earlier study by Hartley and Sutton (2013:51) that teachers held stereotyped expectations that immigrant girls were high achievers, showed maturity and respect, and as such obtained higher grades than boys. The

generalisation and bigotry about immigrant children based on their home countries, for example, that Ghanaians and Zimbabweans are intelligent and hardworking are in line with the stereotypical views of immigrant children of Asian origin living in America. In the US, immigrants of Asian origin are perceived as better performers than immigrants from Latin America, and African American children are described as delinquent, passive, and lazy (Katz, 1999:8; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004:420). As a result of this differential treatment, Latino boys are disconnected from school (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004:420). Most importantly, the fact that a South African girl befriended a Ghanaian and benefited academically from this friendship may imply that immigrant children add value to the school and to other children in general.

#### **5.5.4 Teachers' Perceptions of Immigrant Children's Homework Completion and Submissions**

The teachers' perceptions on immigrant children's homework completion and submission were guided by the traits displayed by immigrant girls and boys during teaching and learning, such as listening, compliance with instructions, punctuality, non-disruption, paying attention, constructive behaviours and respect. The teachers' views were that because girls were compliant with instructions, paid attention in class, and were non-destructive, they were more likely to complete and submit their homework than boys. In this regard, Teacher 6, School C, expressed this as follows,

*Girls pay attention during teaching and learning; they listen to instruction and often complete their homework at school. If they do not understand a concept, they approach teachers and seek clarity. Girls are very sociable. Boys are very destructive in the classroom and do not listen to instruction, and because of their playfulness, they often miss vital information. They do not approach teachers when they meet some challenges about schoolwork, and as a result, a teacher must follow up on homework. Most of the time, you find that they have not even attempted to complete homework.*

In general, teachers perceive girls as being more sociable than boys, and girls to be eager to seek clarity when they face some homework challenges. Previous findings on gendered patterns among immigrant children found that girls tended to be perceived more favourably by teachers than boys (Bang, Suárez-Orozco & O'Connor 2011:25; López, 2003:8). In their study of the experiences of immigrant children in the US, Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hillard (2004:14) found that teachers perceived immigrant girls to be more successful academically and socially than



boys. The inability of immigrant boys to complete and submit homework may negatively impact on their social and academic progress at school. When immigrant boys fail to complete and submit their homework, this represents a missed opportunity to learn, and as a result, teachers may develop negative attitudes towards them. Cooper and Valentine (2001:12) opined that children who complete and submit homework on time obtain higher grades and test scores than their peers who do not. In the context of the foregoing discussion, boys are more likely to obtain lower grades at school than girls.

#### **5.5.5 Teachers' Perceptions of Discipline in the Classroom**

Discipline in schools is a major challenge for all teachers, particularly during teaching and learning, and on the playground where diverse learners converge during the daily breaks. The concerns about insufficient discipline during teaching and learning are justified since children's disruptive behaviours impact negatively on what is being taught and learned. Almost all the teachers interviewed during this study attested to the fact that during learning and teaching time, some immigrant boys were disruptive, unwilling to collaborate, and made it impossible to teach and learn. Teachers claimed that boys were impatient and easily lost concentration, while girls liked to gossip and whisper to each other during the lessons. Teacher 3, School A, stated this as follows:

*Boys are disconcerted during contact time; they make a lot of noise and cannot sit still, and they always fidget, while most girls want to whisper about something to other girls.*

The above finding corroborates the OECD (2009:1) study, which established that disruptive behaviours such as verbal interruption, whispering, fidgeting and name-calling often disturb teachers. Whispering in class while the teacher is teaching is associated with girls, while boys usually fidget because they are easily frustrated due to poor concentration abilities.

#### **5.5.6 The Challenges experienced by Teachers in the Classroom**

The teachers singled out student rudeness and naughtiness as some of the disciplinary problems that they encountered in the classrooms. They stated that some immigrant boys deliberately paid little attention to teachers' instructions and commands, and they complained that some boys often provoked girls in class. It emerged that girls showed rudeness in class by exhibiting disrespectful attitudes in their facial expressions. To stress the rudeness of some immigrant learners, Teacher 3, School A, reported the following frightening incident:

*At one time, everyone had to scramble to the door. It was total chaos, and some children fell on top of each other, when an immigrant boy lit a cracker. The sound was deafening, and everyone took cover, and some ran for their lives.*

Teacher 5, School B, stated that such behaviours reflected the immigrant boys' home environment thus:

*"Some of these kids are being naughty and violent because of lack of proper disciplining measures at home. It is up to the parents to help the schools by emphasising discipline at home. There is no respect for teachers."*

This finding supports Sanchez and Colon's (2005:251) study, which determined that some immigrant boys display behavioural problems and tend to overemphasise their masculinity, behaving as fearless, as tough boys who challenge authority and must be respected by their classmates, thereby displaying their apparent fearlessness. In the same vein, Cammaroto (2004:4), studied the processes of adaptation of young Latino boys at school, and found that there were strained relationships between immigrant boys and teachers. As a result of these poor relationships, immigrant boys adopted antisocial behaviours at school which resulted in teachers classifying them as problematic. If teachers perceive immigrant boys as troublesome, and if immigrant children develop negative attitudes towards teachers, then the teaching and learning environment tends to become contaminated, which impacts negatively on the immigrant learners' school achievement.

#### **5.5.7 Teachers' Perceptions of Physical Violence in Schools**

Physical confrontations are the worst form of disruption in schools because children are involved in actual physical fights that require teachers' interventions. Teachers reported that physical engagements sometimes took place inside the classroom, even in the presence of a teacher, and outside the classrooms during break times. It also emerged that immigrant boys were more likely to be involved in physical fights with local boys than with other immigrant boys. However, teachers were of the view that of late, immigrant boys were also involved in gang-related violence as reported below by one teacher,

*Immigrant boys often engage in sporadic physical fights with other boys, and this is predictable. Immigrant girls are talkative, maybe in as much as to defend and/or protect themselves against adversaries and to get the teacher's*

*attention; this impacted on the flow of teaching and learning. Any small or large dispute impacts on the children's ability to learn (Teacher 7, School C).*

Teachers stated that in recent times, there had been an increase in violence following an incident in which an immigrant girl got into a confrontation with a local girl, and the latter girl was stabbed and sustained serious injuries after school. Teacher 3, School A, revealed this as follows:

*Some girls get involved in physical confrontation; this was previously a domain for boys, but it appears that girls are now taking the initiative.*

The possible reasons for girls confronting each other include friendships, break-ups, rumourmongering, and gossiping. However, despite such physical confrontations between immigrant and local girls, Smit (2003:28) noted that more immigrant boys than immigrant girls were involved in physical aggression. In the South African context, stabbings, physical fights, and murders among learners is a common phenomenon. For example, in the past four years, the number of children who have committed murder has risen from 47 to 736 – more than 700 children murdered somebody in the past year (South African Police Service, 2019:1). One of the major reasons why children are involved in aggressive behaviours could be attributed to exposure to violent behaviours in their environments.

### **5.5.8 Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying in Schools**

Teachers reported that bullying was a major challenge for themselves and their schools, as daily incidents of victimisation were recorded either in the classroom or on the playground. Most of the victims of bullying were young girls and boys in lower grades and most of the perpetrators were older boys in Grade 7. According to teachers, the most common types of bullying within the classroom environment were using vulgar words directed at victims, physical threats and intimidation, provocative gestures, swearing at victims and teasing. Smit (2003:30) conducted a study on bullying in South Africa and found that most of the lower levels of bullying were evident among both girls and boys and took the form of name-calling or using derogatory labels referring to colour, race, ethnicity and countries of origin. Furthermore, Bott (2004:9) and Vandeyar (2011:9) stated that children often admitted that they were occasionally called names such as “stupid”, “dumb”, “skinny”, “fat”, and “retarded” by other children in the classroom and on the playground. Teacher 5 disclosed that one immigrant girl approached her in tears reporting that she had been called “*You stupid Nigerian girl*” by

another local learner. Name-calling causes embarrassment to the victims and reduces their self-confidence, which may negatively influence the child's academic performance.

Teachers reported that besides low-level bullying, there were other forms of bullying, which included physical and physiological intimidation. Physical bullying involves shoving and pushing, kicking, beatings, and slapping, which are most prevalent among immigrant boys, while girls are typically involved in gossiping and isolating other girls as reported by one teacher below.

*Two immigrant boys shoved and kicked a local learner a few days ago. Both parents of the children were summoned to school. On being asked why they beat up another child, the two boys said the boy taunted them and called them names (Teacher 1, School A).*

When a child beats up another child at school, they break the school rules and challenge established authority. Gibson (1987:262) conducted a study on immigrant children of Indian origin in the US and established that immigrant boys broke school rules to show off their masculinity, while immigrant girls expressed their femininity by displaying such traits as positive behaviour and attitudes towards the school. The immigrant girls' positive attitudes towards the school suggest that they valued education and realised that it was a gateway to a better future.

According to teacher participants, bullying during break times was prevalent with some boys from the upper grades targeting younger girls and boys from lower grades to get their food packages or money. In this respect, Teacher 3, School A, stated:

*While on duty, I noticed that one immigrant boy in Grade 7 had seven apples. On further investigating, I found out that the seven apples had been forcefully taken from younger girls and children from the lower grades.*

Teachers reported that the incidents of bullying of younger children at school by older boys were rampant, and the reasons for this varied. These included the fact that boys liked to exercise authority and show power over others, which sometimes led to physical confrontations between bigger boys themselves. Another reason was that some boys wanted to exert more power, and this resulted in groups of boys coming together to form protection groups (gangs) at schools, which could lead to gang violence. Some boys were exposed to being bullied by other senior boys inside and outside school, as the bullying of younger children is a form of displacement.

According to some teachers, there were high incidents of theft of other children's personal belongings like food, pencils, and money from younger children, particularly by boys.

## **5.6 OBSERVATIONS: DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS**

Observing some immigrant girls and boys at school was not an easy task, especially during playtime, as children were not static, but keep on moving from one place to another. The following sections present some observations that were recorded during the study using the observation schedule.

### **5.6.1 Punctuality and Truancy at the Start of the School Day**

Observing and tracking a group of immigrant learners in the mornings revealed that late-coming and truancy were more common among immigrant boys than immigrant girls. I noted that most immigrant girls arrived early before the school started, and they were in the classrooms when their teachers arrived. However, some boys arrived just as the bell rang and some arrived after the lessons had already begun. In cases where girls arrived late or did not go to school at all, they provided the reasons for their lateness, which included having to accompany their younger siblings to nursery schools, performing domestic chores, and having to care for their younger siblings in the absence of their parents. Sympathetic teachers accepted these explanations and appeared to sympathise with the immigrant girls' plights. However, when immigrant boys arrived late or were absent the previous day, most teachers interrogated these boys harshly and did not show the same compassion extended to immigrant girls. Furthermore, boys' late-coming and absence were classified as truancy, and accusations were levelled at boys for playing along the way to school, or for being absent from school due to peer influence. Late-coming and truancy could negatively impact on immigrant boys' academic performance, since missed lessons have a negative bearing on assessment outcomes (Maile & Olowoyo, 2017:6). Teachers may also develop negative attitudes towards immigrant learners, leading to strained relations between the school authorities and immigrant boys.

### **5.6.2 Seating in the Classrooms**

During my classroom observation, I realised that the desks and chairs in all the schools were arranged in rows and columns with hardly any space between them. The teachers' desks were squeezed into a corner of the classroom adjacent to the chalkboard that was worn out and patchy. When the researcher entered the classroom, there was silence followed by whispering and giggling, and eventually the usual greeting of a stranger. When the researcher was offered

a table, he was aware that the children – about 67, which is almost twice the recommended teacher-pupil ratio – would lose focus. However, some of the immigrant children interviewed seemed to be whispering to others possibly because they were explaining the researcher's presence and his project. Some of the immigrant girls who were familiar with the researcher waved their hands at the researcher who waved back, and the teacher introduced the researcher to the children in the classroom.

The seating in the classroom was orderly in rows and columns. Most of the girls were seated in the front and middle rows, including some of the immigrant girls that the researcher had interviewed earlier. Most of the boys were seated on the sides of the classroom. Some occupied spaces near the windows while some were seated at the back of the classroom. This was the case with all the schools that the researcher visited. Boys encircled the girls, and this resulted in boys dominating the classroom space, both during contact periods and while children carried out practical assignments, particularly in technology and science classes. Teachers did not interfere with or make any attempts to change the seating arrangements. During the class demonstrations, the immigrant boys muscled the girls who were seated near the teachers out of the way and occupied the front rows and were the ones most likely to conduct the experiments. The researcher also noted that immigrant girls were driven to the sides and rear of the classroom, implying that in terms of the classroom status they were ranked lower than the boys. The status of immigrant boys during practical experiments ranked higher than that of the local girls, with local boys occupying dominant positions. The seniority and dominance of boys that played out in the classrooms during science lessons perhaps provide insights into why boys often performed better in mathematics, technology, and the science subjects.

Furthermore, it could be argued that power relations determine the relationships between immigrant children and local children, where immigrant girls occupy the lowest status in the classroom and immigrant boys ranked higher than local girls but below local boys. The researcher also noted that whenever girls tried to intervene or talk in practical lessons, they were quickly put down and the boys told them to quieten down. However, in some instances, some girls insisted on participating or forcefully took over from the boys. The disagreements between girls and boys during some science lessons led to confrontations that forced the teacher to intervene. The conflicts between the girls and boys in the classroom are beneficial to the girls, because they allow them to fight for their spaces in the classroom, thus reducing the gender imbalance that is a characteristic of life in schools. However, disagreements between

girls and boys also impact negatively on the progress of learning and may hinder effective learning for all children.

In general, the physical distance between the teacher and the immigrant boys was a cause for concern in the classroom. The researcher observed that the immigrant boys misbehaved and the lack of discipline was rife during the lessons. While immigrant girls complied and followed their teachers' instructions, boys sitting at the back of the classroom were very disruptive, making noises and at times moving aimlessly around the classroom. This was exacerbated by the fact that the teachers' movement in the classroom was frustrated by overcrowding, with desks clustered near each other, making it difficult for the teacher to reach out to the distracted boys. The teachers also opined that the immigrant boys' behaviour counted against them and was the reason why girls outperformed boys at school. This indicates that teachers considered immigrant girls to be less troublesome, more attentive, and more obedient, as most of the time they sat close to the teachers.

### **5.6.3 Participation during Group Discussions in the Classroom**

I observed that the seating positions in the classrooms also influenced how immigrant children participated in the classrooms. As stated earlier, the seating patterns in the classrooms made group discussions very difficult because the desks and chairs were arranged in rows and columns that made it difficult for groups to form during the lessons. During an attempt to group children to undertake a group task, the teacher managed to place children in same-gender groups, with immigrant girls comprising the majority of one of several groups in the classroom. The immigrant boys cast a lonely shadow of self-exclusion, and attempted to form a group with local boys, though for a shorter time. When the teacher attempted to form gender-mixed groups, this was met with resistance from the immigrant boys and girls, with both groups of children saying that it was impossible to work with the other gender because according to boys, girls were too talkative and contributed less to discussions. The girls' resisted working with the boys because they ridiculed them, and they claimed that boys were destructive, and sometimes fought among themselves.

At one point, the teacher insisted on mixed-gender groupings, but those children who were forced to form mixed-gender groups opted to interact with children of the same gender who were seated nearest to them, totally ignoring their group members of the opposite sex. The refusal to join mixed-gender groups, even when forced to do so by the teacher, could be attributed to a belief among both genders that it would be assumed that they had love affairs.

These beliefs may be influenced by gender role socialisation and cultural practices in countries from where the immigrant children originate. In some communities, it is not permissible for girls and boys to fraternise once the girl has reached sexual maturity. If a boy and girl are seen together, they are often subjected to ridicule, which may affect their interpersonal relationships with others at schools and in the community.

#### **5.6.4 The Physical Contact in the Classrooms and Playgrounds**

Much has been written about how boys physically control the classroom and playground areas during contact periods and playtime. In this study, the immigrant boys appeared to occupy more space than girls in the classroom. They moved around unhindered, engaging with other boys who were seated on the other side of the classroom; however, overcrowding in the classroom restricted their movements. They forced their way by invading the little openings that were available, shoving and kicking at each other. Immigrant girls' movements were very limited. Although some girls also moved around, they did not create a commotion as the boys did. At one time during the teachers' absence or break times, the boys organised space in the classroom and kicked a ball around, invading the girls' territories.

I noted that during the periods of wild play, some children sustained minor injuries that required attention from the teachers. This is consistent with Constant and Zimmermann's (2013:13) study that found that maintaining an "aggressive and competitive masculine identity" involves constant confrontation and challenges between boys. This disruptive behaviour has grave implications for both male and female learners and disturbs the flow of the lessons as it prevents children from effectively participating in the classroom. Furthermore, boys appeared to harass girls and small boys in the classroom, and sometimes these harassments had sexual connotations.

Playtimes presented a variety of activities displayed by children. I observed that group formations of boys and girls emerged, and some were formed along the ethnic lines, with some groups composed entirely of immigrant children. The playground proved to be a very exhilarating environment for children, where both girls and boys sharpened their social skills and formed new friendships with children of their own choice. For immigrant children, the playground was an opportunity to learn new things, to make friends, and to adapt to the social and cultural worlds of the host country. However, the researcher noted that the playground was heavily gendered, and it was not easy for some of the immigrant children to make friends. As groups were formed, some immigrant girls played on their own at the edges of the school



ground, while adjacently, local girls played their own games. The researcher noted that unlike in the classrooms where boys occupied the side and rear sections of the classrooms, in the playgrounds, boys occupied the middle areas and so pushed most of the girls to the edges of the playground. The boys were also in clusters of their own, running around playing football, and their rough play, such as kicking, and wrestling took all the space from girls. The researcher soon learned that the reason why some of the immigrant girls did not join in and play with the local girls was that they were not well versed in the rules of the games. Additionally, they met some resistance from locals who refused to let them join in and play with them. At one time, an immigrant girl approached the teacher to report that she was being denied permission to join the local girls, which prompted the teacher to intervene. However, the case was different with the immigrant boys in the sense that initially, the local boys allowed them to play the ball game if they formed a team of their own. This did not materialise, as some local boys protested on the basis that the immigrant team was not balanced in terms of football skills. The boys were forced to reorganise their teams according to their skills to balance the teams. Immigrant boys were more readily accepted by the local boys to participate in the team (group) in accordance with the criteria of football skills. The local boys might also have been forced to consider including immigrant boys into their team because football was played by a large number of talented team players, so in order to enjoy the game and win, it made sense for the local boys to integrate with immigrant boys. The girls were excluded, and the boys refused to grant the girls permission to play football games during school breaks, except when it was enforced by teachers during formal sport days. However, immigrant girls also refused to give boys permission to join them in hopscotch, a game of hopping from square to square.

#### **5.6.5 Lunch-Time Observations related to the School Feeding Scheme**

The playground observations included tracking immigrant children during lunch time when they were in queues at the kitchen to receive food. In schools that are classified under quintiles 1, 2 and 3 or non-fee-paying schools, the DBE has introduced the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), a school feeding programme where children from poorer backgrounds at primary and secondary schools are provided with one nutritious meal to improve their ability to learn. The NSNP's objectives are to prevent both malnutrition and absenteeism among children from low socioeconomic households. The timetables in such schools are tailor-made to suit the learners' feeding scheme, where meals are given to children and the whole school is fed during the first and second breaks.

The researcher observed that in the period leading up to lunch breaks, hordes of children, both girls and boys, lined up outside classrooms doors in gendered ways. In every class, the researcher monitored, teachers allowed the girls to leave first, followed by the boys who appeared to push and shove each other. There was deafening noise around the school as children shouted and pushed each other as they waited enthusiastically for the signal to move to the kitchen, which was about 60 m from the classroom block. Finally, the signal for the first class to move was given and girls were the first to move, followed by boys.

I observed that in every grade, girls could eat first, followed by the boys. In this protocol, there was some semblance of order in the lower grades, although both groups were agitated by this, and the boys kept on shouting and pushing girls. While in the lower grades there appeared to be order, the same could not be said of the senior learners in Grade 7 where girls were the first to eat in the presence of the teacher on duty. The researcher noticed that immigrant girls were pushed to the back of the queue by the local girls who used the advantage of friendship and language to shoulder them out of the way. They pushed in front of their friends, or in some cases, their friends would simply open spaces for them and let them in without the consent of others in the queue. The immigrant girls remained silent until it was time to get food, and then they would simply take their share and disappear into the crowd. In contrast, immigrant boys fought their way through the queues, with smaller boys in Grade 7 being pushed to the back of the queues. It seemed that when it came to boys, power and authority was at play, with the most powerful shoving and pushing through to the front of the queue, while those who were too small to challenge the bigger boys received their food last. Boys disclosed that they pushed each other because they wanted to receive their share first because many times those at the back of the queue received smaller rations than those who were in front. They also stated that food sometimes ran out before they received their share and they had to go the whole day without eating. This was confirmed by the teacher on duty who said that those who ate last were disadvantaged because the food often ran out before they could receive their share.

#### **5.6.6 Interaction between Teachers and Immigrant Children**

The first children to arrive in the classrooms in the morning were girls who usually arrived before their teachers. In one classroom, the desks and chairs were arranged in rows and columns and it was neatly swept. There were a few books on top of the teacher's desk placed at the corner of the classroom, and there was hardly any space to move as desks and chairs were crammed together leaving very little space around the teacher's desk. By half-past seven in the

morning almost three quarters of the children had arrived, and the teacher spoke to some of them outside the classroom. When the bell rang, children ran quickly to the classroom and there was commotion at the door as they squeezed themselves through the door and found their way to their seats. The female teacher sat at her desk holding the register in her hand and the children spoke in whispers to each other as they waited for the teacher to do the roll call before the first lesson started.

The whispers and low voices ended abruptly when the teacher called the children's names from the register starting with the girls. I observed that the teacher paused a little and battled to pronounce some of the names and this was followed by giggles and laughter from the children. As the teacher was unable to pronounce an immigrant girl's surname, some boys tried to help her, but they too mocked and teased rather than pronouncing the name correctly. The immigrant girl whose name was being called sat motionless and appeared to be confused. In most cases, the immigrant children who face insults and scorn in South African schools from their peers opt to remain silent and concentrate on their schoolwork because reporting this to authorities would not yield any results. Eventually, the teacher called out the immigrant child's name correctly and order was restored in the class. However, she did not rebuke the boys for making a noise or teasing immigrant learners. According to Vandeyar (2013:256), many immigrant learners have unusual surnames that immediately serve as identity indicators that they are uncommon South African surnames, and local learners ridicule and mock the immigrant children's names.

The lesson began at eight o'clock with the teacher making some remarks about the previous day's work and then introducing the new content. I observed that during the lesson, the teacher used English as an instructional language, but when some children seemed not to understand, she switched to Sepedi. Most immigrant children were perplexed as the teacher continued to teach in the local language. However, at some point, she realised that some immigrant children could not follow what she was saying, and she switched back to English. Time and again she had to call for order when some immigrant boys grumbled. While the teacher's use of a local language might be genuine, code-switching when teaching could hinder the immigrant children's understanding of the content being delivered, as they may miss some vital information. Additionally, code-switching could be used as a weapon to embed social exclusion.

As the lesson progressed, it was clear that the teacher paid more attention to immigrant boys than the immigrant girls. When the teacher asked a question or required suggestions from the children in the classroom, most questions were answered by the immigrant boys, who at times, gave answers without raising their hands. For their part, the girls' participation was clouded by the boys' verbal domination during the session. Research has consistently shown that immigrant girls are marginalised, underestimated, and ignored by both boys and teachers (Ryan, Klekowski, Von Koppenfels & Mulholland, 2015:79). However, some of the girls tried to contribute by raising their objections to the boys' verbal dominance in the classroom, and the lesson soon degenerated into a verbal exchange between the boys and girls until the teacher had to intervene to stabilise the situation. Studies in classroom interaction have revealed how teachers use prevailing constructions of social class to respond differently to girls and boys from different social class groups. Furthermore, researchers are of the view that immigrant children are well behaved or more compliant in comparison to their counterparts in the host countries (Lansford, Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates & Pettit, 2004:100).

I further noted that while the immigrant boys dominated the verbal space in the classroom during the lesson, boys also received the most verbal warnings from the teacher. The boys were involved in disruptive behaviour, such as calling out, fidgeting and interrupting others during the class discussions. The claim that teachers give more attention to boys than girls could be related to poor discipline rather than academic performance. While immigrant boys are known for their bad behaviour in the classroom, girls are regarded as being good-natured, positive, and receptive in teaching and learning situations. Some researchers are of the view that girls also misbehave in the classroom, and when they do, they are sanctioned more severely than the boys. Connolly (2008:157) observed that while teachers condone boys' behaviour in the classroom, they are less tolerant of girls not fulfilling the "good pupil" role. Nevertheless, the disruptive behaviour of boys during the lesson hampers effective learning and negatively affects their academic performance.

## **5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The study's findings provide evidence that the family, peers, and teachers at school largely influence the gender gap that exists between immigrant girls and boys. Gender is positively linked to other factors that influence differentiated gendered patterns and behaviours evident in girls and boys at schools, and this affirms that gender is central to the gendered experiences of children in schools. Additionally, the gendered behaviours and patterns appear to promote

and preserve gender stereotypes in school, which are often accompanied by xenophobic slurs, discrimination, and harassment from local children. Furthermore, the gendered experiences reflected in immigrant children confirm that girls and boys are socialised differently according to their genders, and thus the study established that there are broad gender differences between girls and boys in terms of parental control and monitoring, children's expectations, as reflected in the major findings of the study discussed and summarised in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to present the conclusions drawn from the results of the analysis of the in-depth interviews and observation and then make recommendations for further research. In Chapter 5, the findings were presented. In this final chapter, a summary of the key findings is presented, conclusions are drawn, and recommendations are proposed. This study set out to explore the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools in the Gauteng Province.

#### **6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

The main aim of the study was to explore the gendered influence of immigrant children in South African schools in the Gauteng Province. Core research question was crafted as follows: How does gender influence the experiences of immigrant learners in South African schools? The ensuing chapters explored, in different ways, the factors that influenced gendered experiences of immigrant children in schools in Gauteng Province.

Chapter 1 outlined the genesis of the research problem by identifying the problem, specifying the research objectives, and laying out the research approach. The anticipated methods and structure of the research were described.

Chapter 2: This chapter provided a review of the research literature relating to gendered experiences of immigrant children in their country of origin and a theoretical framework underpinning the study. The sections covered under this chapter included patterns of gender socialisation of children prior to migration in selected SADC countries, including reasons for families and their children migrating to South Africa. This review was pursued to establish a theoretical understanding of and to form a foundation for crafting the research instruments used.

Chapter 3: This chapter reviewed the literature relating to global perspectives on gendered socialisation of immigrant children in host countries with specific reference to the family, the school and sociocultural factors within the school that contribute to reinforcing gendered patterns between girls and boys. This chapter, too, was pursued to establish a theoretical framework for the study and formulated a research instrument for the study.

Chapter 4: This chapter discussed and examined the rationale for the methodology and research design, the sample area, delimitations of the study, data collection and analysis as well as trustworthiness.

Chapter 5: This chapter dealt with data presentation, content analyses and interpretation of the results.

### **6.3 CONCLUSIONS FROM LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature review focused mainly on the experiences of immigrant children at home, school and on the influences of sociocultural environment at school. Based on the literature review, the conclusions highlighted below were made in accordance with the research questions (Section 1.5).

The main research question was: How does gender influence the experiences of immigrant learners in South African primary schools?

To answer the main question comprehensively, the following sub-questions were posed:

- In what ways do parents influence the gendered experiences of immigrant children?
- How do peers influence the gendered experiences of immigrant children?
- In what ways do sociocultural aspects of schooling influence the gendered experiences of immigrant children?
- How does the learning aspect of schooling influence the gendered experiences of immigrant children?

These sub-research questions informed the formulation of interview questions for immigrant learners and teachers, and the conclusion of the study is premised on the above sub-questions.

The summary of the major findings from the study is tabulated in the following section

### **6.4 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

This section presents a summary of findings from children's interviews, teachers' interviews, and observations.

#### **6.4.1 The Study Findings relating to the Main Research Question**

How does gender influence the experiences of immigrant learners in South African primary schools?

The findings from the literature review and the interviews with immigrant children and South African teachers, and the researcher's observations confirmed that the home, the school, and peers influence immigrant children's gendered experiences. All the participants and findings from the observations confirmed that the home, the school, and peer relationships were gendered. The gendered patterns and behaviours were highly visible from learners and teachers' responses and the observations made showed that there are gender differences between boys and girls. The gender differences between girls and boys could be attributed to gender role socialisation that immigrant children are exposed at home and at school (cf. Section 2.3). The immigrant children reported that at home, parents allocated roles according to gender, that is, whether one was a girl or boy. This was reinforced at school as teachers and peers exerted a strong influence on the development of gender stereotypes.

#### **6.4.2 Findings relating to Sub-Question 1**

Sub-question 1: In what ways do parents influence the gendered experiences of immigrant students?

- **Parental treatment:** The findings from the interviews relating to sub-question one revealed that immigrant children were of the view that at home, parental support, monitoring, and school encouragement were gendered. The immigrant boys reported that their fathers they received preferential treatment from when compared to girls. In the same vein, immigrant girls revealed that they received more support and monitoring from their mothers than from their fathers (cf. Sections 5.3.1; 5.3.2). For example, Immigrant Boy 1, School C, and Immigrant Boy 2, School B, attested to the gendered differential treatment that they were exposed to while at home. The responses of these two learners confirmed the findings from previous research that parents treat children according to their gender while at home. The general preferential treatment that boys receive from their fathers is also linked to support that fathers give to their sons concerning subject choice at school. The immigrant boys reported that their fathers encouraged them to pursue mathematics and science subjects more than they did to girls. This preferential support to boys in mathematics and science subjects may cause girls to develop negative attitudes towards these subjects. It is evident from the above discussion that parents play an important role in influencing their children's intellectual development although in a gendered way.
- **Parental control and monitoring:** It were established that when controlling and monitoring their children's movements, immigrant parents imposed tougher conditions on their



daughters than they did on their sons. Most immigrant girls disclosed that their parents put more restriction on them than on their brothers (cf. Section 5.3.4). In this regard, Immigrant Girls 1, School A; 3, School C; and 6, School B, cited different incidents in which their parents denied them permission to socialise with boys, warned them on the dangers of bad influences and did not sanction their brothers when they came late or attended parties. This is in line with the literature review, which affirms that immigrant parents monitor and put more restrictions on their daughters than on their sons. This is arguably because parents perceive girls to be more vulnerable than boys, and this strict control and monitoring is a means to protect them out of fear that they may fall pregnant, acquire HIV/AIDS, and/or be exposed to drugs.

- Family relationships: The study found that the family influences positive educational attitudes and beliefs via constant discussions about school and educational activities, although such talks were gendered. It also emerged that girls discussed their educational needs and concerns more often with their mothers than with their fathers (cf. Section 5.3.2). Immigrant Boy 2, School B, revealed that both his parents discussed school matters with all his siblings, implying that they valued both their sons and daughters' education, and took appropriate measures to ensure that their children received equal treatment.
- Mothers as role models for immigrant girls: Most immigrant girls stated that they were inspired to learn by observing their mothers and other professional women (cf. Section 5.3.3). For example, Immigrant Girl 5, School A, revealed that she looked up to her mother and other professional women as role models. Furthermore, research indicates that professional women spurred some immigrant girls' schooling expectations as they seek to succeed in their aspirations (Burke, 2006:719). Good role modelling appeared to be an important factor in influencing immigrant girls to develop positive attitudes towards school.
- Role allocation: The findings showed that the family allocated roles and responsibilities according to gender, and that even though both immigrant boys and girls were allocated domestic chores, immigrant girls performed more traditional roles and responsibilities than boys (cf. Section 5.3.5.1). Immigrant Girls 1, School A, and 2, School B, stated that they engaged in cleaning the house, taking care of siblings in the absence and/or presence of parents, washing and preparing the family's food, while Immigrant Boy 3 revealed that he was expected to accompany his mother to the shops and to work outside the home. However, Immigrant Boy 7, School B, whose family did not have any girls reported that as the first-born son, he performed the same domestic chores traditionally carried out by

girls. The literature review confirms that parents prefer to allocate household chores to girls than boys (Talibani & Hasali, 2000) (cf. Section 3.3.1). The fact that girls do more household chores than boys can be viewed as innate nurturing.

- The role of the family in influencing schoolwork: The study found that both immigrant boys and girls performed parental duties in the absence or presence of their parents (cf. Section 5.3.6). It also emerged that immigrant children assisted their siblings to complete their homework because some parents could not speak nor read local languages. Furthermore, Immigrant Girl 1, School A, disclosed that she helped to translate official school documents for her parents and mediated between her younger siblings and teachers whenever there was a misunderstanding. This is consistent with previous studies that found that immigrant girls rather than boys assisted parents to interpret education documents since some immigrant parents could neither speak nor read local languages (Suárez-Orozco, & Qin, 2006:165) (cf. Section 3.6.3).

#### **6.4.4 Findings relating to Sub-Question 2**

Sub-question 2: How do peers influence the gendered experiences of immigrant students?

- Classroom position: The findings relating to sub-question two indicated that immigrant boys in the classroom exclusively occupied the back and side sections and areas near the windows, while most immigrant girls occupied the desks and chairs nearest to the front and the middle of the classroom. Furthermore, findings revealed that immigrant girls did not occupy the front near the teacher but were entirely encircled by boys and other girls, which suggested that they ranked lowest in the classroom. I further observed that immigrant boys controlled the physical space and dominated verbal debates in the classroom. This tended to limit or constrain immigrant girls' participation in the classroom, since they looked behind or in front of them before realising that the teacher expected them to contribute or respond.
- Friendship patterns: The findings also revealed that immigrant children sought assistance from same-sex peers rather than from children of the opposite gender. Immigrant girls preferred to ask for help from other girls rather than boys, and vice versa (cf. Section 5.4.1). Girls gave various reasons as to why they preferred to ask for help from other girls rather than boys. For example, Immigrant Girls 6, School B, and 7, School B, said they preferred to ask for help from other girls because they feared that they would end up falling into sexual relationships with boys. Some stated that their parents did not approve of

associations between girls and boys who were past puberty, as they feared that they would fall pregnant and become involved in drugs. Some girls said boys were disruptive, lacked coordination, and were too playful, and this could affect their schoolwork. However, some boys revealed that they preferred to ask for assistance from girls because they were clever and intelligent, and they thus wanted to benefit academically.

- Furthermore, immigrant girls said they preferred to seek help from other girls because they did not want to be ridiculed and gossiped about. In the same vein, some immigrant boys did not want to ask for assistance from girls because they feared being rejected by members of the group and being classified as weak. Some immigrant girls reported that they preferred to seek help from other girls was because they shared personal secrets and could also ask them for sanitary pads, if necessary.

#### **6.4.5 Findings relating to Sub-Question 3**

Sub-question 3: In what ways do sociocultural aspects of schooling influence the gendered experiences of immigrant students?

- Perceptions of being bullied and discrimination: The findings relating to sub-question three indicated that immigrant children were exposed to certain types of bullying while at school. The study found that the more common types of bullying directed at girls were mocking gestures, threats of violence, gossip, racial and ethnic categorisation, while the most common bullying for boys included direct physical confrontation, physical assaults, pushing, name-calling and teasing (cf. Section 5.4.2.1). For example, Immigrant Girl 2, School B, revealed that she was always threatened by local boys who called her names such as ‘border jumper’ and insulted her that she had smelly armpits and should return to her country of origin. The study established that immigrant girls were victims of bullying by local boys than girls. While girl-to-girl bullying was not common, there were sporadic incidents of bullying by local girls on immigrant girls limited to teasing and veiled threats. The findings from teacher interviews indicated that in some instances, immigrant girls engaged in physical confrontations with the local girls. The possible reasons for immigrant girls engaging in physical violence were identified as friendship break-ups, rumour-mongering and gossiping. Literature has shown that girls are more involved in situations of indirect violence, such as malicious gossip (Pereira et al., 2013:13).

Furthermore, Immigrant Boy 3, School C, claimed that he was exposed to ethnic xenophobic insults by local boys. He revealed that he was physically threatened and

referred to as being black. The literature review confirms these claims (cf. Section 3.6.7). Vandeyar (2013:256) vividly captures local learners' categorisation of immigrant learners according to the colour of their skin. She established that many local learners labelled immigrant learners according to their blackness. In the same vein, the study found that immigrant boys resisted intimidating behaviour, which sometimes resulted in fights or physical contact. About bullying and physical confrontations, the teachers interviewed revealed that immigrant boys were often more likely to be involved in physical fights than girls (cf. Sections 5.5.7; 5.5.8).

- **Language barrier:** The findings further revealed that the inability to speak a local language triggered hostility towards immigrant children and resulted in social isolation (cf. Section 5.4.1). For example, Immigrant Girl 5, School B, revealed that she was often excluded from playing games with local girls because she could not understand the songs that were sung and they were unable to follow the rules of a game being played. Using local languages could be a ploy by local learners to exclude immigrant learners from participating in group discussions and partaking in games. Preventing immigrant learners from participating in groups denies them access to knowledge and information that is vital for their learning outcomes, and this could lead to narrow learning experiences and lowered expectations (Adair, 2015:217). However, the findings revealed that immigrant boys were permitted to participate in football teams, depending on their soccer skills, and that skilful immigrant players had a higher chance of being selected to play for the local boys' team. While local girls used language as a criterion to allow immigrant girls to participate in local games, local boys used football skills to decide whether to allow immigrant boys to play for the team.

The issue of language also came out prominently during the interviews with teachers. The findings from teachers' interviews and observations revealed that immigrant children who could not speak, read, and write in local languages were struggling to cope during teaching and learning (cf. Section 5.5.1). For example, Teacher 1 pointed out that immigrant children who could not speak, read, and write in local languages were likely not to do well in school. This is because they missed out vital subject content during the lesson, as teachers tended to code-switch from English to a local language to explain difficult concepts to the learners. In the same way, a study by Vandeyar (2011:256) (cf. Section 3.6.7) confirmed that black African immigrant learners were doubly disadvantaged since they entered the country lacking proficiency in both English and local languages.

- **Group dynamics:** The findings further revealed that the composition of groups was gendered with both immigrant boys and girls resisting engaging in mixed-gender groups to discuss school-related projects (cf. Section 5.4.4). It also came out that when teachers tried to enforce mixed-gender groups in the classroom, both immigrant boys and girls talked to their peers of the same gender sitting next to them and ignored the group members of the opposite sex. This was corroborated during the observations conducted in all the three schools (cf. Section 5.6.3). I also noticed that the seating arrangements in the classrooms were mainly gendered with girls and boys sitting in same gender groups. As stated above (cf. Section 5.4.4), both girls and boys resisted sitting together. The immigrant girls sat in the middle of the class sandwiched by local girls who sat near teachers, and the immigrant boys sat at the back leaning on the walls of the class and close to the windows. However, during mathematics and natural science lessons when learners were engaged in practical exercises, boys pushed girls back and sat in front and started conducting practical experiments. To some extent, this explains why boys tend to outperform girls in mathematics and science subjects.
- **High expectations and aspirations:** It also emerged that both immigrant boys and girls had high expectations of and aspirations for schooling; both valued education and had the ambitions of completing Grade 12 and going to university (cf. Section 5.4.4). Immigrant Girl 4, School B, talked about completing her education to gain knowledge and own a house, while Immigrant Boy 3, School C, dreamt of a decent life. The immigrant children's high expectations and aspirations could reflect their parental expectations, which acted as extrinsic motivators for these children to pursue education to the highest level.
- **Homework completion:** The interviews revealed that most immigrant girls completed their homework at school and home, and submitted their work in time, while immigrant boys did not. This is because immigrant girls sought assistance from friends, teachers, and parents for the concepts they did not understand (cf. Section 5.4.6). In this regard, Immigrant Girl 5, School B stated that she preferred to complete her work at both school and home where she could ask for assistance from teachers and parents. Teacher 6, School B, echoed the same sentiments that immigrant girls complied with the submission deadlines on homework and completed their work at school. She revealed that the immigrant girls were not compliant, particularly with schoolwork, but they also listened to instructions, paid attention and were sociable (cf. Section 5.5.4). In contrast, immigrant boys preferred to complete their schoolwork at home. In this regard, Immigrant Boy 6, School B,

acknowledged that he completed his schoolwork at home, and that sometimes he abandoned it to join his playmates after school. The teachers' interviews confirmed these sentiments, and that immigrant boys did not handover their homework on time, and that in some instances, they did not even attempt to do it. The teacher participants described the immigrant boys' behaviours as antisocial and that they were playful, destructive and did not listen to instructions in class. It has been confirmed by previous studies that girls were more committed and consistent in doing their homework than boys (Xu, 2006:173; Núñez et al., 2015:375) (cf. Section 3.5.3). By implication, the immigrant boys miss out a lot of information in class and this may lead to unsatisfactory academic performance.

- Corporal punishment: The study found that corporal punishment was not monitored in all the schools and that it was still applied in some schools contrary to the South African School Act of 1998, Section 10 (1) that abolished it. For example, Immigrant Girl 2, School B, disclosed that she was once beaten because she did not submit homework on time, while Immigrant Boy 2, School B, described how he was beaten on the buttocks with a hose pipe in full view of his classmates (cf. Section 5.4.7). Furthermore, I also witnessed learners being beaten by teachers during my field observations. Corporal punishment is a destructive method of punishment as it dehumanises learners and may impact negatively on their academic achievement. Erath, Bierman and Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group (2006:271) contend that corporal punishment is destructive and an ineffective way of disciplining learners; hence, they suggest that teachers should be encouraged to use some alternatives that develop and reinforce positive behaviour (cf. Section 3.7.1).
- The study further found that immigrant children still communicated with their relatives in their countries of origin via modern technologies. It found that immigrant girls, rather than immigrant boys, communicated more often with their relatives back home, especially with their grandmothers. The immigrant girls used their close relationships with their mothers to maintain contact with their relatives in their countries of origin. Whenever their mothers communicated with their family members back home, immigrant girls would use this opportunity to talk to their grandmothers and cousins on various matters of mutual interest.

#### **6.4.6 Findings relating to Sub-Question 4**

Sub-question 4: How does the learning aspect of schooling influence the gendered experiences of immigrant students?

- Absenteeism: The findings from the previous literature review and teachers' interviews revealed that schools experience high rates of absenteeism of immigrant children at the beginning of the first of the year due to a number of reasons. As a result, immigrant children miss out crucial school information that may affect their academic performance at the end of the term (cf. Section 5.5.2). Teacher 2, School A, pointed out that the delays in coming to school on time during the first term were due to the tight security at the ports of entry as some learners did not have proper documentation, and flooded rivers which made it difficult for some immigrant children to cross during the rainy season. Teacher 3, School A, revealed that some immigrant children came to school visibly shaken and stressed due to the arrest of relatives at the ports of entry or along the way to South Africa, which impacted negatively on their learning outcomes (cf. Section 5.5.2).

Furthermore, the findings from my non-participant observations revealed that tardiness and truancy in sampled schools were more common among immigrant boys than immigrant girls. It emerged from data analysis that some immigrant girls arrived earlier than their teachers, while some immigrant boys came to school well after school had already started. I noted from my observations that some teachers were more sympathetic to immigrant girls who came late to school than to immigrant boys. This was based on the belief that girls had to accompany their siblings to nursery schools and sometimes perform domestic chores before coming to school. In contrast, immigrant boys' absence or late-coming to school was viewed as misbehaviour. Partly because of this, teachers may develop negative attitudes towards boys. Late-coming and absenteeism impact negatively on the academic performance of immigrant children as they miss out valuable learning time during their absence.

- Classroom and playground interactions: The findings revealed that immigrant boys physically dominated the classroom and playgrounds unlike immigrant girls. From my observations at the selected schools, the immigrant boys appeared to occupy most of the space in the classroom and playgrounds (cf. Section 5.6.4). While in the classroom boys were observed to physically dominate the classroom space, they moved freely up and down while girls were forced to sit near the teacher. During play time, boys also occupied most of the space; as a result, girls retreated to the periphery of the playgrounds. These findings are consistent with the information obtained from teachers' interviews, which revealed that besides dominating the classroom and playground space, immigrant boys were rude, naughty, and ill-disciplined at school, particularly during the lessons (cf. Section 5.5.6).

Teacher 5 linked this type of behaviour to “lack of proper upbringing” from the home and emphasised that parents should help schools by instilling discipline at home (cf. Section 5.5.6). Sanchez et al.’s (2005:251) (cf. Section 3.6.3) study on immigrant children found that some immigrant boys displayed behavioural problems and tended to emphasised their masculine dominance in class and on the playgrounds, behaving fearlessly as tough boys who could challenge authority. This type of behaviour by immigrant boys has grave implications for the whole class as it disturbs the flow of normal teaching and learning.

- Perception of immigrant children: The findings from literature review and empirical study revealed that teachers perceived and labelled immigrant children according to their home countries in a subtle way that showed some xenophobic sentiments. This stereotypical view held by teachers may impact negatively on immigrant children’s academic performance (cf. Section 5.5.3). For example, immigrant girls and boys from Nigeria were labelled as “noisy”, and Ghanaian as very “clever” (Teacher 5, School B), while Zimbabwean immigrant girls were labelled as all-rounders, hardworking, sociable, and disciplined in the classroom (Teacher 4, School B). In general, immigrant boys from other countries were described as problematic. This is consistent with studies in the US where teachers perceived immigrants of Asian origin as better performers than immigrants from Latin America, and the African American learners, the last group, delinquent, passive, and lazy (Rosenbloom et al., 2004:420). Such stereotypical views and labelling could reflect the attitudes and beliefs that South African teachers have about immigrant learners. These descriptions and characterisation of immigrant children may lower their self-esteem and educational expectations and aspirations.

## **6.5 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY**

### **6.5.1 Conclusions regarding Policymakers**

The study has noted that gendering, specifically of immigrant children, results in serious challenges in South African schools. Some of these challenges cannot be solved at school or community level and instead require government intervention. Principals and teachers, in particular, face challenges in South African schools, as the number of immigrant children continues to rise, and these professionals have not been given policy guidelines on how to deal with immigrant issues, nor do they appear to have the skills on how to manage classrooms and schools in general. Additionally, gender issue policies are too general and, although teachers often propose policies, they are ignored. Thus, special attention from the government is needed



in the form of decisive policies that address gender, as well as immigrant children's challenges in schools.

### **6.5.2 Conclusions regarding Family Roles and Responsibilities**

Family gender differentiation and identity construction begins at home, in that familial practices are often profoundly gendered in terms of relationships and roles. The qualitative study confirms that both immigrant girls and boys are assigned household chores, but that girls, as opposed to boys, are assigned the more traditional roles and responsibilities reserved for women. Similarly, immigrant boys are allocated roles and responsibilities fulfilled outside the home. Some of the domestic chores allocated to immigrant girls are cleaning; cooking; bathing siblings; and preparing food for the family. Some of the duties reserved for boys include doing the shopping; tidying outside; and possibly tending the garden. Both immigrant boys and girls often take care of their siblings, accompany them to school, and fetch them after school. This may be an indication that immigrant parents are often away from home, either at work, and/or trying to provide for their families. Immigrant children who are exposed to mixed-gender chores are more likely to develop appropriate social skills that will benefit them in future engagement in group activities at school and the community, as opposed to children who are not exposed to mixed-gender chores.

The family's monitoring and controlling of children is heavily gendered, with parents providing monitoring, controlling, and supervising to immigrant girls as opposed to immigrant boys. Immigrant parents may be motivated to enforce stricter controls on their daughters, as opposed to their sons, in an effort to prevent them from engaging in antisocial behaviours, and/or in a bid to protect their daughters from the social perils that exist. This could indicate that immigrant girls are more at risk than immigrant boys, and as a result, they are more heavily supervised than boys, not because they are unfairly treated, but as a way of protecting them from being exposed to people who may exploit them. While immigrant girls may view these restrictions as unfair treatment, being confined to the home gives them an opportunity to engage in their schoolwork. By being restricted to the home, immigrant girls, as opposed to their male counterparts, are given the chance to dedicate more of their efforts to educational matters, such as completing their homework and assignments, putting them at an advantage regarding school work. Because of this, immigrant girls are more likely to do well at school than are the immigrant boys.

The study also revealed that the gendered differences between immigrant boys and girls were well pronounced, with immigrant boys preferring to discuss educational matters with their fathers than mothers, while girls preferred to discuss educational matters with their mothers rather than with their fathers. This could imply that fathers' value their sons more than their daughters, while mothers regard their daughters' education very highly. This suggests that the family's responsibility to their children's education is evident, albeit gendered, and this could influence educational achievement at school in a gendered way. On the other hand, these same-gender conversations between father and son and mother and daughter enable parents to pass gender knowledge and skills that are gender-appropriate to their children. Socialising children in terms of gender-appropriate behaviours could harm children later in life, as they may lack the appropriate sociocultural skills to integrate with the other genders at school. For example, they may find it difficult to form mixed-gender groups at schools.

In addition, the study revealed that girls and boys receive different types of intellectually motivating treatment (conducive environment, emotional and material support, extra tuition) from their parents regarding their schooling, with immigrant girls receiving less attention from their fathers than their male counterparts. The findings also showed that immigrant boys receive motivational attention from both parents, a reflection that may show that immigrant parents still prefer to support boys rather than girls' education. The support provided to boys may spur them on to do well in schools, especially in such areas as mathematics, while conversely; it may discourage girls from performing well in those subjects.

Furthermore, the study showed that immigrant boys and girls help their younger siblings to complete their homework in the absence of their parents at home. The reasons for immigrant children taking on the parental duties of assisting siblings may be twofold: the parents may be absent from home due to work commitments; and immigrant parents often leave for work before their children go to school, and return to the family home late, making it impossible for them to provide homework assistance to their children. The onus now rests on older siblings to provide homework assistance to their younger siblings.

The study also showed that some immigrant parents face language challenges in host nations, where their inability to speak, read, and/or write the host country's languages means that they have to rely on their children to assist their siblings with their homework assignments. Related to the above concept, the study also revealed that immigrant girls, as opposed to immigrant boys, work as their parents' assistants. Immigrant girls help their parents to interpret and

translate school documents or information, and they accompany their parents to school meetings, since some parents cannot speak, read, and/or write local languages. This means that immigrant girls, as opposed to immigrant boys, have a better understanding of general school requirements and are more likely to have fewer disciplinary problems than the boys.

Lastly, the study established that immigrant girls were inspired by their mothers and other professional women to work hard at school so that they could one day have professional careers. This may imply that part of the immigrant girls' achievements at school could be accredited to the inspiration derived from observing their mothers and other professional women in the labour market.

The evidence provided above points to the fact that immigrant family life is highly gendered, and that the gendered experiences of immigrant children play out in the daily lives of children at school and home. A gender gap exists between immigrant girls and boys because their parents treat them differently. The gendered treatment of girls and boys in the home may impact negatively on their future educational and occupational outcomes.

### **6.5.3 Conclusions regarding Schools**

The study established that the interaction between genders and local learners is a source of conflict, and as a result, immigrant children experience bullying, discrimination, and harassment from South African children. Both immigrant boys and girls experienced threats of physical assault, verbal abuse, and xenophobic slurs inside the classroom and on the playground with girls and younger boys being targeted by bigger boys. The occupation of strategic places in the classroom and playground triggered bullying tendencies, and teachers did not put a stop to these behaviours as they considered them to be routine behaviours in the school. A school environment that is characterised by racial undertones, poor discipline, and various types of intimidation is harmful to the school climate and adversely impacts on the teaching and learning outcomes for learners.

The study also showed that teachers are challenged by acts of bullying and physical violence in schools, with immigrant boys being more involved than the girls in bullying and sporadic physical confrontations. Poor discipline and acts of violence in schools widely and negatively impact on a school's atmosphere as they create fear and despondency among learners and affect teaching and learning. As a result, these types of learner conduct affect everyone at school, and impact negatively on academic achievement. Furthermore, it alters the teachers' perceptions,

particularly towards immigrant boys, and this affects teacher-student relationships, which could reduce immigrant boys' educational achievements.

#### **6.5.4 Conclusions regarding Classroom Environment and Discrimination**

The study established that immigrant girls and boys perceive the classroom environment to be discriminatory, which is often triggered by the different genders and ethnic groups' inability to coexist. This perhaps sheds light on the classrooms' inner functions, as well as the school's culture, and provides a rare opportunity to analyse students' assessments, classroom management, and instructional strategies used during teaching and learning. If these were used effectively, they could help in containing poor classroom discipline and racial undertones.

Furthermore, pupil-to-pupil relationships between genders and various ethnic groups at school are governed by the pupils' ability to communicate in local languages. The study established that local language was used as an instrument to isolate immigrant girls from socialising with other girls. The use of language to isolate immigrant children was more pronounced against girls as opposed to boys, with some girls being denied the opportunity to join local girls in play because they could not speak, understand, and follow instructions while they played games. Preventing immigrant children from participating in games is a form of discrimination that may impact negatively, especially on immigrant girls, as this may lead to isolation and feeling out of place, subsequently negatively impacting the immigrant children's educational outcomes.

Furthermore, the study established that peer influence in friend choice was gendered, and girls and boys preferred to ask for assistance for school and non-school-related work from friends of the same gender. It is possible that this same-sex preference to select friendship companions is influenced by educational and sociocultural factors, and immigrant children realise that by collaborating and coming together they stand a chance to reap the rewards of academic success. Immigrant girls sought academic help from other girls, and immigrant boys generally asked for help from other boys. However, some boys sought academic help from girls, which might be a realisation that girls perform better academically, and/or that girls were more organised than boys. On the other hand, the social distance between girls and boys may be culturally defined, as in some cultures girls are socialised not to seek help from boys once they reach a particular age after puberty, as such social interactions are deemed inappropriate by certain cultural communities. However, such restrictions may be counter-productive in education, as the inability to acquire strong social skills at a young age could impact negatively on learners' participation in group work activities at school.

### **6.5.5 Conclusions regarding Teachers**

The study determined that there are insignificant differences between immigrant girls' and boys' expectations and aspirations regarding their quest for an education in a host country. The study showed that immigrant girls and boys were ready and prepared to continue with their education and complete Grade 12, to pursue their first degrees, and to select careers of their choice. This positive attitude to continued learning may reflect their parents' educational expectations being reflected in their children's educational expectations. Additionally, the positive attitude towards education and the grand expectations expressed by immigrant boys and girls may be influenced by parental monitoring and supervision at home. Earlier, mention was made of immigrant parents strictly monitoring and controlling their daughters more so than their sons. This strict parental monitoring and controlling of immigrant girls enable them to devote more of their time to educational matters while they are at home. As a result, girls may perform better academically than boys at school.

### **6.5.6 Conclusions regarding Homework**

Gendered differences concerning homework completion and submission were clearly apparent during the interviews conducted with immigrant boys and girls. Immigrant girls are more likely than immigrant boys to complete and submit their homework on time. Furthermore, immigrant girls completed their homework at school and at home, while boys preferred to complete their homework at home, and were less likely than the girls to submit their homework on due dates. This could indicate that immigrant girls adopt strategies that enable them to complete and hand over their assignments on time. For example, immigrant girls apply a double strategy: they complete homework at school and at home; and they often ask for assistance from classmates and teachers when they are faced with particularly difficult concepts. This strategy enables immigrant girls to finish homework on time and also allows them to meet their deadlines, which is impossible for immigrant boys to accomplish, because they prefer completing homework at home but they are more likely to join their friends on the streets and play than engage in homework. One reason for immigrant girls engaging in homework at school might be to avoid parental monitoring and control. At school, immigrant girls experience the freedom of being away from their parents' constant monitoring and controlling, and as a result, immigrant girls are more likely to be committed and to perform well at school, as opposed to their male counterparts.

In the same vein, the study revealed that South African teachers' perceptions of homework completion and submission was heavily gendered and stereotyped in favour of girls, as they asserted that girls completed and submitted homework timeously, and boys did not. The teachers' perceptions that immigrant girls, as opposed to boys, complete and submit their homework on time might be a reflection of the positive relationships between teachers and immigrant girls, while at the same time, it might reveal the social distance that exists between teachers and boys. This could lead to teachers developing negative attitudes towards boys. Perhaps these positive relationships between immigrant girls and teachers concerning homework completion and submissions spurs on the girls to maintain their relationships, by ensuring that every time they are given assignments, they complete them on time and hand them over on the due dates. Immigrant girls are also more likely than immigrant boys to perform well in school, since homework assignments contribute towards final formative assessments at school. Furthermore, the social distance between immigrant boys and teachers could imply that teachers are unlikely to provide adequate support to boys; this may result in lower academic success for boys at school.

#### **6.5.7 Conclusions regarding Punishment**

The study revealed that the learners' inability to complete and submit homework did not go unpunished by teachers. Immigrant children who do not complete and submit homework are beaten, even though corporal punishment is outlawed in South African schools. The reason why corporal punishment is still applied could be that teachers do not use appropriate control and discipline measures to punish learners who misbehave at schools, or that other methods have failed to bring about the desired results. Corporal punishment might be the only readily available method to use to reduce and or control children who misbehave at school. Immigrant boys were of the view that teachers targeted them more often than they targeted immigrant girls, because the boys neither completed nor submitted homework timeously. The fear of corporal punishment was a major cause of absenteeism among male students. The use of corporal punishment in schools could have a negative impact on educational outcomes.

The study indicates the existence of gendered differences concerning disciplining immigrant children in the classroom. Teachers acknowledge gender difference in the classroom and stated that boys were more undisciplined than girls. This may point to the relationships established between teachers and immigrant children, which form the basis of poor discipline in the classroom. Additionally, teachers are inclined to gauge immigrant girls according to the

relationships that they establish with them. For example, immigrant girls are often racialised and stereotyped as obedient and good-natured, and teachers reward this type of behaviour by acknowledging their contributions and work, and hence strong bonds are formed between teachers and girls. As a result, immigrant girls are likely to perform well in school, considering that they are more closely associated with the teachers than the boys are. Furthermore, the issue of the gendered behaviours between immigrant girls and boys is vital, because it underpins the evaluation of classroom management and discipline in the school. This also shows how intricate the teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil relations are in schools, as well as the challenges that teachers are exposed to in South African schools.

#### **6.5.8 Conclusions regarding Technology**

The study established that using modern technology to communicate with relatives left behind is gendered, and that immigrant girls often use technology to stay connected with people in their home countries, while immigrant boys do not. This could imply that the constant communication with relatives in their home countries enabled girls to sustain their ethnic identity while living in host countries, and those girls were more likely to return to their country of origin than immigrant boys. For immigrant boys, the inability to communicate with relatives back home meant that they were unable to maintain their ethnic identity and were less likely to return to their countries of origin.

#### **6.5.9 Conclusions regarding Language Challenges**

The study revealed that immigrant children are stigmatised and discriminated against because of their inability to speak, read, and write local languages, and that teachers code-switch languages during teaching and learning sessions. While code-switching during teaching may be justified, immigrant children are disadvantaged when this happens, since they may not fully understand certain concepts being explained during teaching and learning. This may impact negatively on the immigrant children's educational outcomes during formal and summative assessments.

#### **6.5.10 Conclusions regarding Punctuality, Absenteeism and Attendance**

The perceptions of some South African teachers are that due to the December-January holidays, immigrant children often report late during the first term of the year. During these holidays, most immigrant children return to their country of origin with their parents and are expected to return on time for the school opening in January. However, the study revealed that the teachers

were of the view that when schools opened in January, some immigrant children did not report to school. The teachers claimed that absenteeism was high among immigrant children during the first term, and this was a cause for concern for teachers since vital quality learning time was lost. Absenteeism may affect children's achievements at school, and it is likely that immigrant children's performances will be compromised by their continued absence during the first term.

Furthermore, the study showed that late-coming and truancy were more common among immigrant boys than girls, and that teachers' reactions to late-coming and truancy were heavily gendered, with immigrant girls getting sympathetic reactions from teachers, while the boys were chastised. The teachers' reactions to late-coming and truancy showed that immigrant boys and girls were treated differently, even though the offence committed was of the same nature, raising speculations that gender stereotypes influence teachers' reactions, rather than the offence committed. The gender stereotypes showed that teachers held a general belief that, in general, boys misbehaved, even if their late-coming was justified. By coming late to school and playing truant, immigrant boys missed out on vital teaching and learning time, which could impact negatively on their academic achievement.

#### **6.5.11 Conclusions regarding Attitudes and Behaviour**

The study indicates that teachers characterise immigrant children according to their countries of origin and gender. This may suggest that teachers have stereotypical views about immigrant children according to where they come from, and whether they are boys or girls. Gendered stereotyping is strong among South African teachers who view immigrant girls, especially those from Ghana and Zimbabwe, as high achievers and more disciplined. South African teachers perceive immigrant children from other countries beside Ghana and Zimbabwe as low performers, undisciplined, and lazy, particularly the boys from these countries. Such gender bias held by teachers may determine the types of relationships that are established between immigrant children and teachers and may influence girls' and boys' academic achievements.

Teachers are important in the life of every child. The teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and values impact positively and negatively on children's lives, and hence influence children's own attitudes and beliefs. Their beliefs on gender roles are internalised by children and hence influence the gendered behaviours of boys and girls at school.



### **6.5.12 Conclusions regarding Sitting Positions**

The study showed that inside the classrooms, a lot of horsing around takes place between immigrant boys and girls. Firstly, the study established that classrooms were overcrowded, and this made life very difficult for everyone in the class, including the teachers. Inside the classroom, learners were engaged behaviours that promoted gendered experiences, which limited educational outcomes. The teacher and some immigrant boys and girls appeared to be engaged in gendered behaviours; for example, inside the classroom, boys occupied strategic areas on the sides and at the backs of the classrooms, and near windows, ensuring that girls sat at the front and in the middle of the classrooms. This suggests that boys controlled the physical space in the classroom and during active teaching and learning, they were the ones who talked the most, almost drowning the girls' voices and limiting the girls' active participation in the classrooms.

The teachers did nothing to address the imbalances, but continued teaching as if everything was in order, and these encouraged gendered practices by both immigrant girls and boys. Whenever the teachers attempted to seat girls and boys together, this was met with resistance from both genders, who refused to form mixed-gender groups. This tended to disrupt the smooth flow of the lessons, as it caused commotion in the classroom, as children hustled, pushed, and dragged desks, and this was exacerbated by overcrowding, which made movement almost impossible. The teachers' movements were constrained by the arrangement of desks and chairs, preventing their being able to reach out to boys and this impacted negatively on the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

The classroom is a place where all children should be treated equally, and educational opportunities are created for everyone, regardless of one's gender. A good teacher ensures that all pupils are treated equally, and the classroom atmosphere should be a place where everyone feels safe and secure enough to participate in activities. Classrooms are places where gender intersects with ethnic and culture, and this may be a source of conflict, as children have diverse needs. Teachers are responsible for fostering mutual love, kindness, equity, and compassion for all the learners, irrespective of their genders and countries of origin. Failure to build a close community within the classroom only encourages ignorance, racism, and prejudice.

## 6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section highlights recommendations of the study organised under the specific categories.

To address issues in terms of gender and immigrant children's experiences, the following recommendations are proposed for the government and other interested stakeholders to consider in order addressing the gender gap in schools.

- The Department of Higher Education and Training in charge of teacher training programmes at universities and teacher training colleges should initiate curriculum reviews on inclusiveness in education. The curriculum review should interrogate gender issues and the knowledge and skills teachers need to manage gender and immigrant children's issues in schools. Teachers must be adequately trained to handle children who do not speak any of the South African languages, and new teaching recruits should receive training on gender and immigrant children's issues in schools.
- The government should consider employment of competent bilingual practitioners with migrant knowledge, and these practitioners should act as gender role models. These bilingual practitioners would be the go-between the school communities and immigrant children and their parents, with their roles being those of counsellors, interpreters, and mediators.
- For those teachers who are already serving in the DBE, the government should initiate in-service training to equip these teachers with new skills and knowledge regarding how to address gender and immigrant children in general.
- In consultation with stakeholders, the DBE needs to craft strategies and pedagogies for developing an appropriate second-language strategy for immigrant learners.
- Whereas the South African schools continue to receive diverse immigrant children of various ethnic backgrounds, the school management teams have no formal training on multiplicity and intercultural instructions involving foreign learners. They lack appropriate management knowledge and skills to supervise and provide support on how to handle issues related to immigrant children. The DBE should organise management courses that equip school management teams with appropriate leadership skills to deal with issues related to migrant children in schools.
- The DBE should ensure that the reviewed curriculum addresses gender issues by organising awareness campaigns directed not only at schools but also at parents and communities.
- Gender and immigrant issues need to take priority and the revised school curriculum needs to be inclusive and address gaps found in text-books, which need to be aligned with the

new dispensation to address issues like gender stereotypes, discrimination, racism and a host of issues that impact negatively on immigrant children in South African schools.

- Policies and inducements must be designed to inspire girls to participate in traditionally male-dominated subjects such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), including professions in these subjects.
- When immigrant children come to school, they have already been exposed to and internalised gender norms and values at a young age in their countries of origin. Sometimes it may be too late for teachers to reverse this; however, the efforts are worth pursuing. It is for this reason that schools should open communication channels with immigrant families regarding how children reproduce gendered experiences at school and the impact that these experiences have on educational opportunities and future outcomes.

## **6.7 MODEL FOR ADDRESSING THE GENDER GAP IN SCHOOLS**

This section presents a framework (Figure 6.1) for implementation by the DBE, the family, the school and interested parties. The model could be adopted by various stakeholders interested in education to address gender and immigrant children's concerns at various levels of society. The model was produced by the researcher and it is hoped that, if consistently implemented, it would reduce gender gaps and challenges faced by immigrant children.

Addressing gender and immigrant children's challenges in schools and interactions between outputs and outcomes depend on:

- Teaching all children openly and directly about migrants and gender issues. Involving parents and schools and helping them address migration and gender issues.
- Involving policy makers at all levels and educational leaders. Ensuring that the department of education in liaison with schools develop pro-gender and inclusive curriculum that addresses traditional, familial cultures and migration issues.

The model condenses the anticipated strategies to address gender gaps and immigrant issues in schools. The model depicts overlapping and interconnected relationships undertaken by the family, the school, and the DBE to address gender and immigration issues at schools. The model could be used as a guideline to address gender inequalities in education. The model comprises complementary institutions that are fundamental actors responsible for implantation of gender strategies.

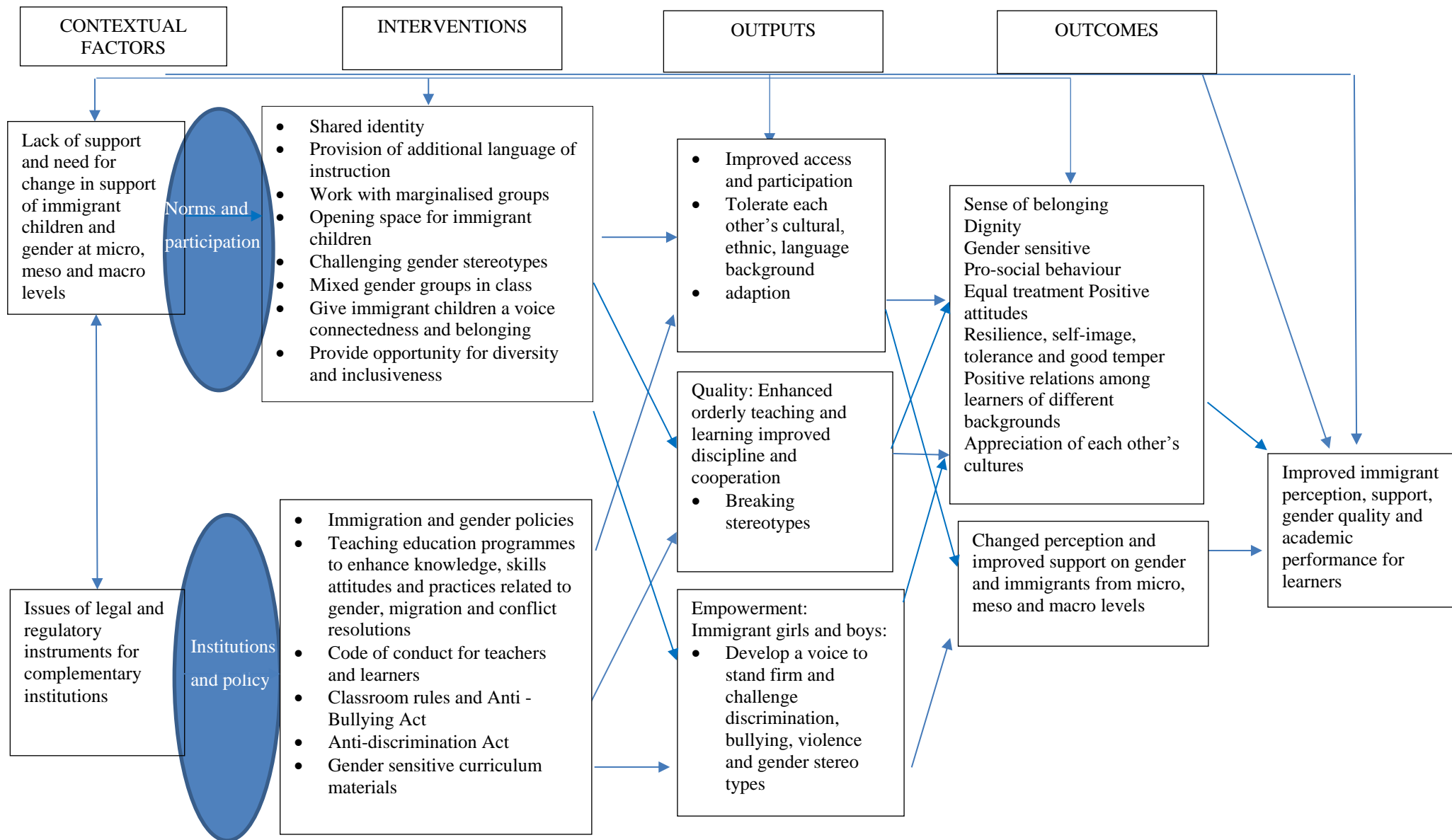


Figure 6.1: Gender and immigration model

### **6.7.1 The Family**

The parents need to provide a safe and nurturing place where both girls and boys can explore gender and gender practices. It is important for parents to adopt a gender-neutral parenting style that allows them to treat their children equally, irrespective of whether the child is a girl or a boy. Parents should give balanced comments to promote the development of gender-balanced behavioural traits, free from gender bias. This also means that parents need to allocate roles and responsibilities accordingly, not to streamline them according to gender, as this may promote the development of gender stereotypes. Parents should provide schools with relevant information about the child's behaviour and gender expressions. They should also attend school meetings so that they can share relevant feedback from these meetings with their children. When parents participate in school activities, they tend to appreciate the significance of why children go to school. Furthermore, parents should constantly monitor their children's performance, assist with school assignments and homework, and assist with their children's development needs.

### **6.7.2 The School**

When immigrant children come to school, they are likely already to have acquired and internalised gender norms and values in the home. Notwithstanding challenges that immigrant children are exposed to while they are at school, schools should open communication structures with parents regarding gender and their immigrant status. Teachers can transmit information to parents about gender expressions, attitudes, and behaviours, and suggest possible solutions on how to address challenges that children are experiencing at school. Furthermore, the school could make parents cognisant of the harmful effects of assigning roles and responsibilities according to the child's gender. However, teachers should respect immigrant children's ethnic and cultural differences.

In line with the DBE's policies on gender and migration, school principals should enforce the DBE and the school's policies and regulations that address gender, sexual harassment, immigration issues, school violence, and bullying. Furthermore, to ensure successful implementation of these policies and regulation, administrators and teachers must be trained on how to monitor and combat bullying through an evidence-based monitoring tool designed to combat bullying.

Schools should promote inclusiveness and human rights by teaching subjects such as Life Skills and Social Sciences, subjects that equip children with skills such as respect, tolerance, and human rights. This could be promoted through drama and the creation of pro-gender groups at school. Through play, children interact with one another, and children develop a self-concept about themselves and others, as well as understanding of gender and migration. During such interaction, children may pose questions about gender and migration issues to their teachers and parents. The responses provided help enlighten children's understanding about gender and immigrants.

Teachers should be good role models and act in good faith in resolving issues related to intimidation, harassment, and segregation. Exposing immigrant girls to female professionals and business leaders and women in decision-making positions, offers these girls and opportunity to observe women in action, and this will encourage girls to take school seriously (cf. Section 5.3.3).

Teachers should use mixed-gender groups in the classroom and should be encouraged to avoid using tags such as "boys" or "girls" but instead, they should use general expressions like "Good morning, class." The use of such a general phrase gives children the impression that they are all equally valued.

### **6.7.3 The Department of Basic Education**

The successful implementation of these suggested strategies to address gender-based issues, hinges on policies and regulations designed by the DBE. The DBE should revise the current curriculum on inclusiveness in education with a view to accommodating gender and migration issues in the new dispensation. Teachers need to be equipped with skills that will enable them to deal with gender and migration. In addition, the DBE should employ bilingual teachers who are knowledgeable about migration and its effect on the children they teach. These teachers could assist with interpretation, and act as mediators between immigrant communities and schools.

The DBE should organise in-service training to equip teachers with knowledge and skills on how to handle gender and migration issues. Furthermore, the DBE should reach out to immigrant parents with a view to enriching them about immigration laws, particularly with reference to those laws and regulations that apply to education.

The DBE should investigate the possibility of developing a language that immigrant children would find easy to use. The DBE should design monitoring tools that would enable it to monitor whether gender and immigration policies were being implemented.

## **6.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Whereas the study provides an overall exposition of gendered experiences in South African schools, the gender gap between immigrant girls' and boys' experiences were found to be significant in some cases, and insignificant in others. The insignificant differences might have been a result of the challenges that the researcher faced prior to, during, and after the interviews. The reasons for this are explained hereunder.

Firstly, the researcher was faced with population selection challenges. The three subject schools selected the study participants without the researcher's involvement. The reason given was that the schools had no records of immigrant learners, and so it was left to Head of Department (HODs) to carry out the process of selecting participants. A few of the participants were the first generation born in South Africa to immigrant parents and they often travel to their parents' countries of origin, visiting relatives. This means these children were fully exposed to the South African culture and spoke local languages fluently.

Secondly, at one school, the researcher noted that during the first three days on site, the HOD and her team enthusiastically offered their assistance. They tried to visit classes personally and organise participants to attend the interviews. However, on the fourth day, the researcher faced constraints as the site organising teams had disappeared, the researcher had to rely on the help from other staff to help organise the participants, and the boys played truant. Thus, it took a couple of days for the researcher to interview all the participants, specifically the boys.

Thirdly, although the interviews were conducted after school, one school did not give the researcher permissions to start earlier. Therefore, the researcher was unable to carry out some follow-up questions to verify issues that arose in the interview.

## **6.9 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The main purpose of the study was to explore the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. It is expected that the study findings will positively influence the DBE and schools to develop an inclusive curriculum that addresses traditional, familial cultures and migration issues.

### **6.9.1 Contributions to the School and Parents**

It is assumed that the findings of the study would sensitise teachers to the numerous conditions and challenges immigrant children face in their daily lives in South African schools. The gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools are shaped by gender socialisation through the family, school, and peers. It is further presumed that the recommendations of this study would make the DBE officials, teachers and other stakeholders aware of the challenges faced by immigrant children in South African schools and equip them with some coping skills that that would help them adapt to new environments.

### **6.9.2 Contribution to Knowledge**

The researcher explored a relevant and modern-day phenomenon that has an impacted negatively on immigrant children in schools considering the xenophobia attacks directed at foreigners that has been witnessed recently. The high number of immigrant children also has a debilitating impact on the South African education system and the country in general. The department of Education has identified new immigrant entrants as one of the main challenges that the nation is experiencing faced by schools. It is from this perspective, that this study contributes new knowledge to gender, education, and migration literature.

## **6.10 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Gender is a powerful phenomenon that greatly impacts individuals' self-concept and as such it influences immigrant children's gendered experiences in their daily lives in the family and at school. It is through the family, school, peers, and other various agencies that gender is attained, via the process of gender socialisation. Research findings show that there is a gap between the gendered experiences of immigrant children at school.

- Researchers need to explore the link between gender, education, and migration further, as this will add value to these topics, as they will evaluate how gender socialisation patterns after migration shape and influence behaviour patterns at school. The results will assist stakeholders to map out strategies that can be used to address gender bias and challenges faced by immigrant children in schools.
- Research should be conducted to determine the link between gender, migration, and educational outcomes, because the immigrant children's educational achievements shape their futures and their occupational outcomes later in life.



- It is necessary to conduct research aimed at understanding how teachers' gender beliefs influence the gendered experiences of immigrant children in schools.
- Scholars and educators should further explore the concept of gender neutrality to evaluate whether it could add value to education, particularly if gender stereotypes are to be reduced and contained to create a just society.

## **6.11 CONCLUSION**

The findings of the study indicate that the family, peers, and teachers at school influence the gender gap that exists between immigrant girls and boys to a great extent. It also emerged that gender relates to other factors that influence differentiated gendered patterns and behaviours evident in girls and boys at schools, which affirms that gender is central to the gendered experiences of children in schools. The findings also established that the gendered behaviours and patterns promote and preserve gender stereotypes in school, which are often accompanied by xenophobic slurs, discrimination and harassment emanating from local children. Furthermore, the gendered experiences reflected in immigrant children confirm that girls and boys are socialised differently according to their genders. Finally, the study established that there are broad gender differences between girls and boys in terms of parental control and monitoring, as well as children's expectations as reflected in the previous chapter.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

	
<b>UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE</b>	
Date: 2018/04/18	Ref: 2018/04/18/07690061/35/MC
Dear Mr Sibanda	Name: Mr T Sibanda
<b>Decision:</b> Ethics Approval from 2018/04/18 to 2023/04/18	Student: 07690061
<hr/>	
<b>Researcher(s):</b> Name: Mr T Sibanda E-mail address: 7690061@mylife.unisa.ac.za Telephone: +27 78 265 6870	
<b>Supervisor(s):</b> Name: Prof Lekhetho E-mail address: lekhem@unisa.ac.za Telephone: +27 12 429 3781	
<hr/>	
<b>Title of research:</b> <b>Crossing the border: Gender schooling experiences of immigrant children in South African schools</b>	
<hr/>	
<b>Qualification:</b> PhD in Educational Leadership and Management	
<hr/>	
Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2018/04/18 to 2023/04/18.	
<hr/>	
<i>The <b>Medium risk</b> application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2018/04/18 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.</i>	
The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:	
1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.	
	University of South Africa Pretorius Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150 <a href="http://www.unisa.ac.za">www.unisa.ac.za</a>

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2023/04/18**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number **2018/04/18/07690061/35/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



**Dr M Claassens**  
**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**  
mcdtc@netactive.co.za



**Prof V McKay**  
**EXECUTIVE DEAN**  
Mckayvi@unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

University of South Africa  
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PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
www.unisa.ac.za

## APPENDIX B: GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER



### GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

### GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	04 July 2018
Validity of Research Approval:	05 February 2018 – 28 September 2018 2018/145
Name of Researcher:	Sibanda T.
Address of Researcher:	1102 Ebony Part Midrand 1865
Telephone Number:	078 265 6870
Email address:	7690061@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Research Topic:	Crossing the border: Gendered schooling experiences of immigrant children in South African schools.
Type of qualification	PhD
Number and type of schools:	Four Primary Schools.
District/s/HO	Johannesburg East

#### Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

*[Signature]* 05/07/2018

1

*Making education a societal priority*

#### Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 355 0488

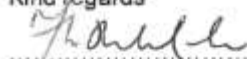
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za

Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
4. A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
12. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Ms Faith Tshabalala

Acting Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 05/07/2018

**Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management**

7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 355 0488

Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za

Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

## APPENDIX C: REQUEST TO PRINCIPALS AND SGBS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



The Principal  
The School Governing Body

Dear Sir/Madam

### Request for permission to conduct research at your school

Title of the research: “Crossing the border: Gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools”.

I, Temba Sibanda, am doing doctoral research under the supervision of Prof M. Lekhetho, an Associate Professor at the University of South Africa. I hereby request your approval to conduct research at your institution.

The title of the research study is “Crossing the border: Gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools”. The aim of which is to explore the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools. Your school has been especially selected because it has a considerable number of potential participants who could contribute valuable information to the research study.

The study will involve carrying out interviews and a document analysis, and video recordings which will be carried out on dates and times that are agreeable to you.

The benefits of this study are to produce valuable information about gender and immigrants, educators and various stakeholders will use the information gathered to improve the conditions of immigrant children in schools. The information will also assist the education department to formulate gender policies and regulations that address immigrant children’s challenges in the educational arena; this may lead to improved social wellbeing and quality in education.

Learners’ participation in the study is completely voluntary. Thus, the researcher will write letters requesting parental and learners’ consents/assent to authorise their involvement in the study. The researcher will explain the purpose of the research, and the participants’ rights during the entire research process. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

The Potential risks are that the process of interviewing may inconvenience learners. Learners who experience emotional reactions before, during, and after the interviews will receive counselling.

The feedback procedure will entail sharing the research findings with your school and other stakeholders in education.

Yours Sincerely  
Themba Sibanda

## APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT: PARENTAL LETTER



Dear Parent

Your child is invited to participate in a study entitled: Crossing the border: The gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools.

I am undertaking this study as part of my doctoral research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is to explore the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools, and the possible benefits of the study are to reduce gender imbalances and address challenges faced by immigrant children in South African schools. I hereby respectfully request permission to include your child in this study because he/she falls under the category of children appropriate to the research study topic. I expect to have 18 other children participating in this study.

If you allow your child to participate, I shall observe her/him in class and also request him/her to participate in an interview. These interviews will be conducted at a local school in a safe and private venue.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His/her responses will not be linked to his/her name or your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only. There may be some risks to your child during participating in the study. They are foreseeable risks that may cause inconvenience to her/him before during and after interview process.

I aim to minimise any inconveniences related to the interviews as best as possible. Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education are that information gathered will help formulate gender-related policies and regulation that will reduce gender discrimination, particularly among immigrant children. Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or choose to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly, you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place during regular classroom activities and after school, with the prior approval of the school and your child's teacher. However, if you do not want your child to participate, an alternative activity will be available. The researcher may arrange an alternative venue suggested by you at a time convenient to you.

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you, and your child will be asked to sign the assent form, which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he or she will not be included, and there will be no penalties for non-participation. The information gathered from the study and your child's



participation in the study will be stored securely on a password-protected computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, all records will be erased.

The benefits of this study are to provide valuable information to the researcher in order to understand challenges of gender directed at immigrant children, and to provide teachers with guidelines on how to deal with issues of gender in schools, and how gender equity could be used as an inclusive tool to all children despite cultural, ethnic, and social differences. Potential risks are that your child may recall unpleasant memories that may lead emotional distress. In such an instance, and with your permission, your child will be referred to appropriate counsellors.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. If you have any questions about this study, please ask my study supervisor, Prof M. Lekhetho, Department of Education Management and Leadership College of Education, University of South Africa, or me.

My contact number is 0782656870 and my e-mail is 7690061@mylife.unisa.ac.za. The e-mail of my supervisor is lekhem@unisa.ac.za. Permission for the study has already been obtained from the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

You are deciding about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him or her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Name of child:

Sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/guardian's name (print) Parent/guardian's signature Date

## APPENDIX E: PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS' CONSENT



Dear learner

My name is Teacher Mr Temba Sibanda and would like to ask you if I can come and talk to you about your home and school experiences. I would also like to observe you when your teacher is teaching and when you play outside on the playground with your friends. I would also like to look at your exercise books and to learn more about how you complete the written work/homework your teachers give you.



If you say YES and agree to my requests, I will come and watch you when you are in class learning with your teacher and when you are playing on the playground. I will also talk to you about things happening to you at school and at home. I will not ask you to tell me about things that you do not want to talk about.

I will also ask your parents if you can take part. If you do not want to participate, that will be okay. Remember, you can say yes or you can say no, and no one will be upset if you don't want to participate, and even if you agree initially and then change your mind later and want to stop, that will be fine. You can ask any questions that you have now. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, ask me the next time I visit your school.

Please speak to your mom or dad about taking part before you sign this letter. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. A copy of this letter will be also given to your parents.

Regards

Teacher Temba Sibanda

Your Name	Yes, I will take part 	No, I don't want to take part 
Name of the researcher		
Date		
Witness		

## APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER FOR TEACHERS



Dear Sir/Madam

This letter is an invitation to participate in a study that I, Temba Sibanda, am conducting as part of my research as a UNISA Doctoral student, entitled “Crossing the border: Gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools”. Permission for the study has been obtained from the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, Unisa. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to this research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail, should you agree to participate. The importance of an educational environment that is conducive to is important for every learner at schools, including non-South African learners. For schools to be inclusive, it is imperative that they understand gender dynamics in the school environment, more so of immigrant learners.

Your participation in this study is vital and entirely voluntary. It will involve face-to-face interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes and will take place at a mutually agreed upon location at a time that is convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

In this interview I would like to receive your views and opinions on the research topic. This information may be used to formulate policies and regulations that address gender issues, with the objective of improving conditions in schools as well as the welfare of learners, particularly those learners who come from outside South Africa.

With your permission, all face-to-face interviews will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and thereafter, the recording will be transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, a copy of the transcript of your interview will be sent to you, providing you with the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points made. All information you provide will remain completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this research study, and any identifying information will be omitted from the research report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password-protected computer for five years in my locked office.

The benefits of this study will inform gender policy and regulations that could improve the wellbeing of learners, particularly immigrant children.

You will not be reimbursed nor receive any incentives for your participation in the research.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at +27782656870 or by e-mail at [7690061@mylife.unisa.ac.za](mailto:7690061@mylife.unisa.ac.za)

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Temba Sibanda on +27782656870 or e-mail [7690061@mylife.unisa.ac.za](mailto:7690061@mylife.unisa.ac.za).

I look forward to engaging with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, you will be requested to sign a consent form.

Yours sincerely

Temba Sibanda

## APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LEARNERS



### APPENDIX G: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR IMMIGRANT LEARNERS

Topic: Crossing the border: the gendered experiences of immigrant children in South African schools.

This questionnaire will be divided into two parts: (a) home experiences; (b) school academic/social experiences.

#### Home experiences of immigrant children

1. In what ways do you think your parents influence you to do well at school?
2. What are your parents' expectations of you?
3. Let us discuss the restrictions or control that your parents place on you. Do you have a brother/sister? If you do, how often do your parents refuse you permission to go and play whilst at the same time allowing your brother/sister to go and play?
4. How do you spend your time at home when you are not out with your friends?
5. How often do your parents support you with homework/schoolwork?
6. Given the choice between spending time at school or at home, which place would you like to be? Why?
7. What kind of chores do you do or are assigned to you at home? Do you have sisters/brothers? If so, what chores are they expected to do? How do their chores differ to the chores that you are expected to do?

#### The academic and social experiences of immigrant learners

1. How important do you think it is for you to perform well school? Why?
2. Do you mind receiving assistance from a friend who is not a girl/boy while you are at school? If not, why not? What kind of assistance do you usually get?
3. What action/s does your teacher take when you do not complete your homework?
4. Has your teacher ever said anything that has made you uncomfortable in private or in class?
5. Do you complete your homework whilst at school or at home? With whom? Why?
6. Do you always complete and hand in your homework on time? If no, why not? What does your teacher say if you do not hand in your homework on time?
7. Do you feel insecure at school because of being bullied? If you have been bullied, how did you protect yourself from bullies?
8. Have you ever been called names because you are foreign-born/or because of you are a boy/girl? If so, in what way has this affected your schooling?
9. What are your expectations for yourself once you complete Grade 12?
10. Do you sometimes feel out of place while you are school, during class, or at break-time? What makes you feel this way? What do you think will make you feel better?

## **APPENDIX H: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS**



## **APPENDIX H: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS**

1. Could you please tell me a bit about your experiences with immigrant children in general?
2. Are your expectations of immigrant girls the same as your expectations of immigrant boys?
3. What educational value do you think immigrant children bring to the school environment?
4. Do you experience any problems from immigrant girls and boys turning in homework or projects?
5. What behavioural difficulties do you experience in class from immigrant girls and boys?
6. What learning difficulties do immigrant girls and boys experience in class or at school?
7. What do you suggest should be done to address the issue of unsatisfactory performance by immigrant children?

## APPENDIX I: OBSERVATION



### APPENDIX I: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Observation will take place in the workplace of selected educators.

Interaction with learners will be observed and recorded.

Observer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender Girl  $\Delta$  Boy  $\Delta$

Category observed	Comments
Interaction with other learners during teaching and learning	
Teacher-pupil relationship displayed with different learners in the classroom	
Learner response/participation during teaching and learning	
Learner behavioural challenges observed during the teaching and learning	
Seating position in the classroom	
Participation during group discussions teaching and learning	